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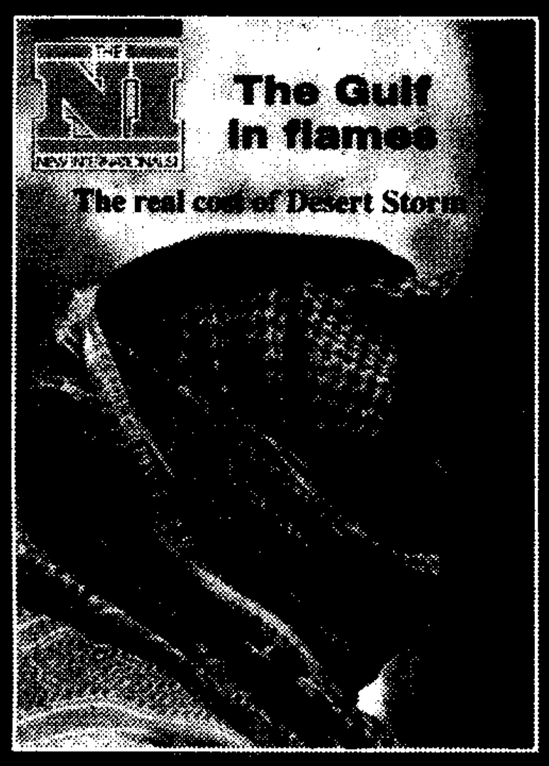

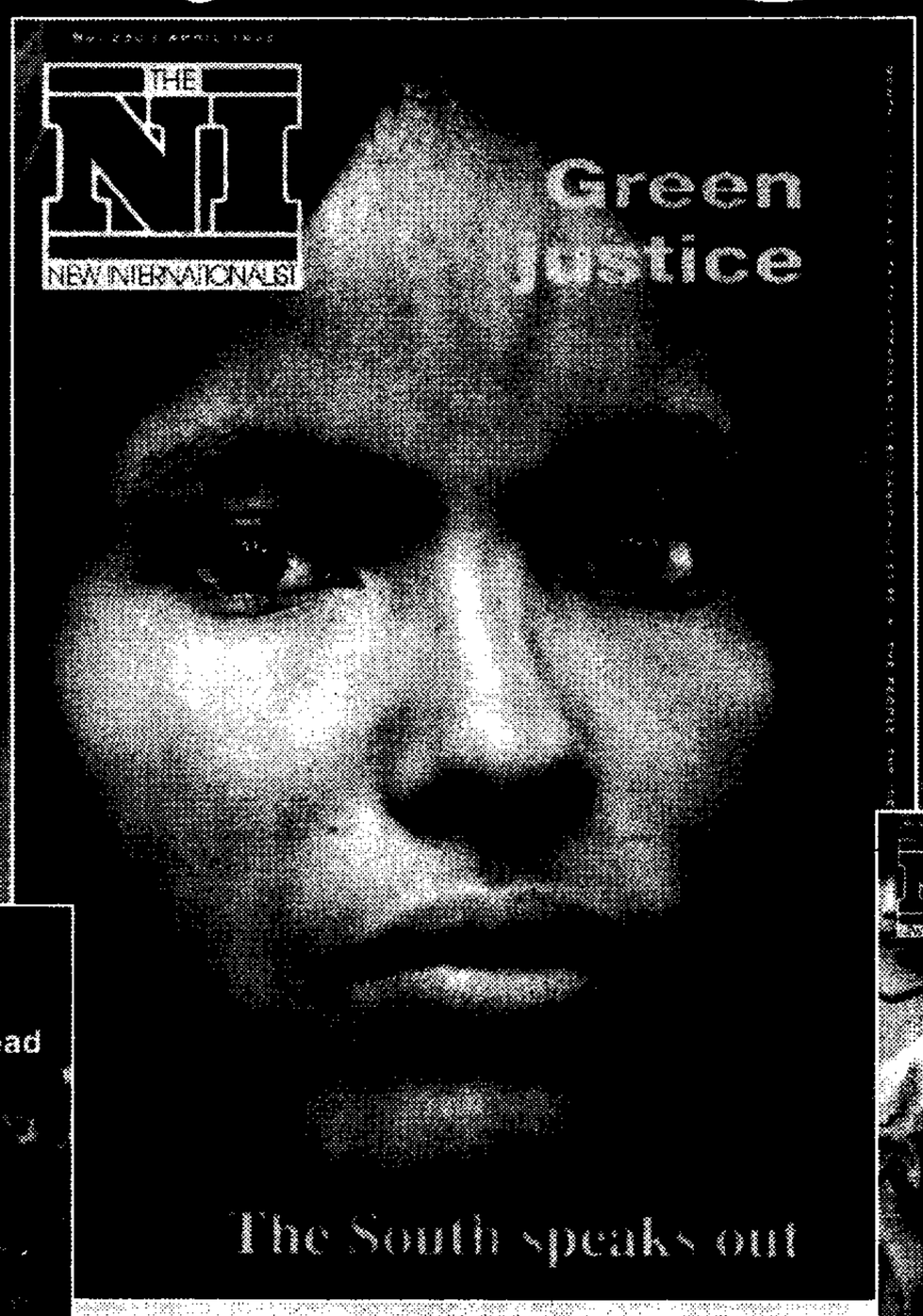

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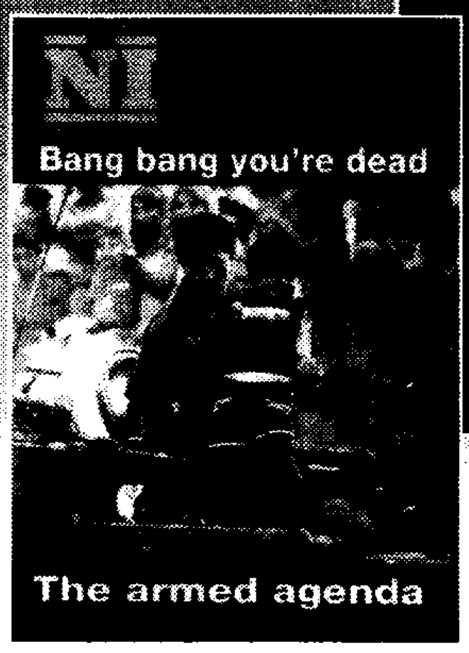

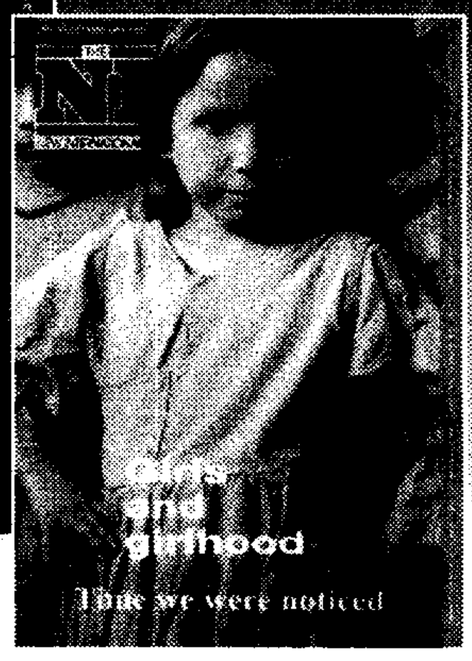

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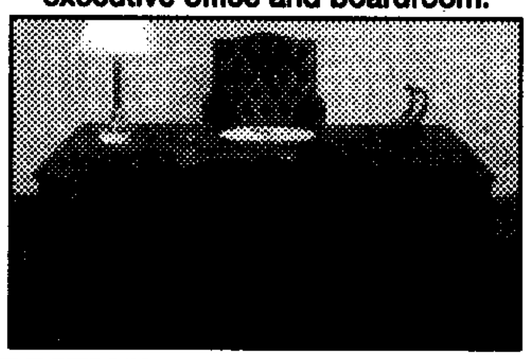

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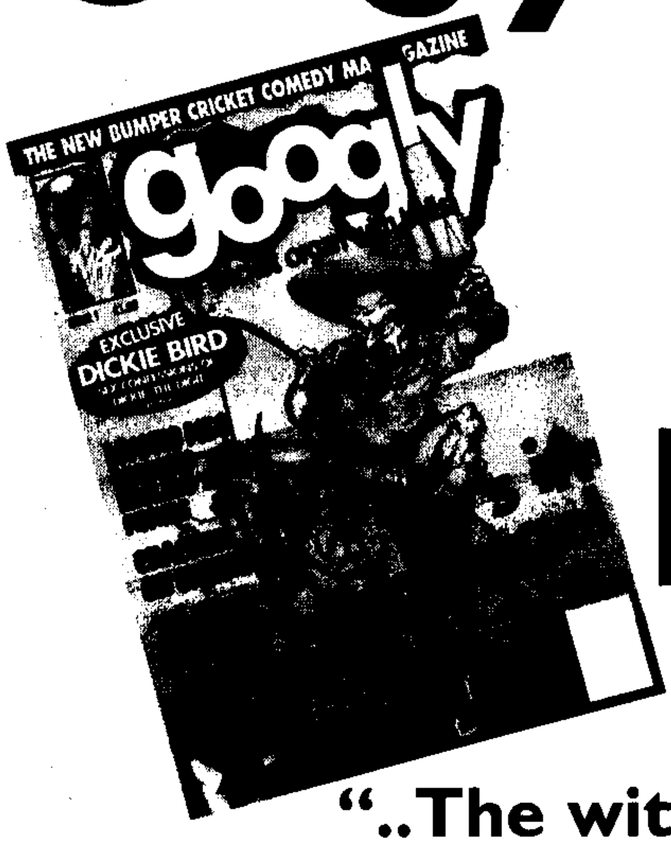

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Gnome

THE attempt by the former leader of the Labour Party Mr Michael Foot to sue me personally for libel is as disgraceful as it is cowardly.

It is an abominable travesty to suggest that I had any knowledge whatsoever of the *Sunday Gnome*'s story "Foot Spied for Stalin — Shock Horror" prior to its publication.

It has never been my policy to interfere in any way whatsoever with my papers who have complete freedom to publish stories as they see fit.

I have personally instructed my editors to print this denial in a prominent place in every single one of my 299 papers.

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COLOUR SECTION

JONATHAN AITKEN likes to portray himself as the whipping-boy of the media, brought down by their ceaseless cruel exposures. What is remarkable, however, is not how much has been printed about him, but how little.

For example, although Michael Heseltine confirmed that Iranian gun-running had been suspected during Aitken's tenure on the board of Astra, the arms company, he never pointed out an even more eyebrow-raising fact: according to board minutes of the Astra subsidiary BMARC, Aitken was taking money from and sitting down at a boardroom table with men who were simultaneously involved in bribing civil servants at the ministry of defence.

Aitken turned up at the Grantham HQ of BMARC on 28 February 1989 for a board meeting. Also there were Chris Gumbley, group chief executive, and James Miller, finance director. Only a couple of days before the meeting, Gumbley had arranged for a local car dealer at Wingham, Kent, to supply a black BMW car to Dennis Stow, a senior civil servant in a key position in the MoD's ammunition division. BMARC was competing for a £12 million order for a new 81mm mortar flare for the British army, and Stow was in on all the classified meetings. So Gumbley — Aitken's fellow-director — gave the MoD man £13,500 cash in an envelope to pay for the car.

This sweetener was accompanied by a £1,900 spring break for Mr and Mrs Stow, booked through a Thanet travel agent on 20 February. Shortly after Aitken left the board meeting, the MoD official and his wife boarded a Virgin jet at Gatwick for two ill-gotten weeks in the Miami sun.

A year later, Gumbley and Stow were arrested and eventually jailed for corruption. James Miller, the finance director, was found by a subsequent DTI inquiry to have known about the bribes: he was forced to resign from the board.

Gumbley and Miller's boardroom colleague, Jonathan Aitken MP, had quit BMARC before the arrests. And in April 1992 he was made minister for defence procurement, where he was placed in charge of all contracts to supply the British Army — a fitting task for a veteran arms dealer.

Aitken says he never noticed his colleagues were running guns to Iran during his spell as a director. We must also assume he never noticed that, in what spare time they had left over, they were also bribing British civil servants. Can anyone be this stupid? (*Yes — Ed.*)

ONLY weeks after parading his wife and children as proof of what a wholesome family man he was, Jonathan Aitken now stands revealed as an adulterer.

Paula Strudwick, who gave a lengthy account of their affair in the *Sunday Mirror*, says he never knew she was also a flagellant prostitute. All very true, no doubt. It is nevertheless striking how often the oldest profession seems to crop up in his career. As we pointed out in the last *Eye*, he interviewed numerous S&M prostitutes for his book *The Young Meteors*. In the 1970s, he met the vice queen Helen Buckingham when she was campaigning to legalise prostitution.

In our last issue we also drew attention to Aitken's friendship with Dr Christine Pickard, a North London GP. By an odd coincidence, we now learn that in 1971 Helen Buckingham and Dr Pickard jointly bought a holiday house near Brindisi, in Italy, which they still have — though they have become embroiled in a long and acrimonious dispute about the ownership.

During his recent crusade against "bent and twisted journalism", Aitken has had no doughtier defender than Paul Johnson. Only two weeks ago, Johnson filled a page of the *Spectator* with a moving eulogy to his pal Jonathan — whom he regards as a noble, honest and utterly wholesome character. Now that Aitken's extra-marital fling has been exposed, will Johnson again rush to support him? Presumably not. For in the *Daily Mail* of 6 January 1994, writing about the downfall of Tim Yeo, Johnson delivered a stern moral lecture about "the irresistible march of sexual promiscuity". His conclusion: "Adultery is wrong and should be punished."

Perhaps, in a professional capacity, the lovely Paula Strudwick might care to administer the punishment.

WHEN Robert Atkins, the Tory MP for South Ribble, resigned as an environment minister last week it was hardly noticed in London and in his local *Lancashire Evening Post* it merited only five paragraphs on an inside page. As he told the paper's political writer: "It is always better for people to say 'Why?' rather than 'When?' in the matter of retirement."

Why indeed? The former sports minister and cricket-loving Rank Xerox sales executive, who won Preston North for the Tories in 1979, has been one of John Major's closest friends in Westminster. In 1990, campaigning for Major during the fall of Thatch, Atkins told Major to stay away from Westminster and undergo the wisdom tooth operation which silenced him so effectively for that tricky week before the vote.

Atkins, 50, who once described himself as "a seat of the pants operator who has never lost any campaign that I have organised or been involved in", now says he wants to spend more time with his family and work on select committees. Like Jonathan Aitken, he may also need to spend more time with m'learned friends.

The Lancashire "socialist media tycoon" Owen Oyston is trying to resurrect his claim against Atkins, Lord Blaker, a former foreign office minister, and Bill Harrison, a Lancashire Tory millionaire, for conspiracy to defame him. The case is backed by 10 hours of tape recorded conversations between Blaker, Atkins and Harrison and one of their investigators, Michael Murrin, who kept the village fish and chip shop at Longridge, Lancs. The existence of the tape recordings was first revealed by the *Eye* in October 1991.

This action has been lumbering round the courts since Oyston issued proceedings, through Carter Ruck and Partners, three days after the usual deadline on September 15 1992. Four days later a Queen's bench division master exercised his discretion and allowed Oyston's action to go ahead. In August 1993 Blaker, Atkins and Harrison got the decision overturned by Mr Justice Ognall, who ruled that it had been an abuse of court process. Last month Oyston bounced back with an appeal which is now being considered.

"There'll be another one along in a minute"

Street of Shame

MIRROR Group supremo David "Rommel" Montgomery has often boasted that his *People* title is folksy, funny and not at all sleazy. Quite how he reconciles that with the paper's full-frontal nude photo of Hugh Grant's Sunset Strip hooker, legs akimbo, is hard to explain.

Hundreds of *People* readers phoned threatening to cancel the paper because of its "pornographic front page". And, more embarrassingly still, the splash photo of "Divine Brown" is now widely suspected of being a fake of a lookalike tart, flogged for several thousand pounds by two pimps who had been peddling phoney photos and stories to gullible British hacks during the hysterical hunt for the Divine Ms Brown.

At least four other papers, including the *People*'s two sister titles, had already rejected the picture.

THE Divine Brown saga also seems to have created panic on top of scoop at the *News of the Screws*. The Digger himself apparently erupted with rage after details of the $100,000 buy-up, complete with Lear jets and lavish hotel suites, were published in the *Daily Mirror*.

The Digger had ordered a complete cover-up on the cost of the *Screws* operation after officially telling the US media that none of his papers would countenance such a big-spending deal with a convicted hooker and junkie.

On top of that, Rupert's senior executives were warning him that the scandal could wipe millions of dollars off the box-office value of Grant's new movie *Nine Months*, on which 20th Century Fox had already spent at least $15 million in a huge advertising campaign.

And who is the unfortunate owner of 20th Century Fox? Why, Rupert Murdoch.

THE *Daily Express* knows how to treat its reporters — especially the ones it sends into war zones.

Chief foreign corr Danny McGrory had barely touched down for a two-week holiday in Majorca with his wife Liz and two children than the *Depress* ordered him to Bosnia.

No one from the ailing rag contacted Liz to apologise for messing up the family holiday — or to let her know if her husband had dodged the bullets or not. The only communication came when McGrory returned several weeks later and received a brief but offensive memo from managing editor Jim "Hatchetman" Anderson. It rejected McGrory's claim for reimbursement for his ruined holiday.

Elsewhere the *Depress* has come up with a new staffing solution: trainees on two-year secondment at £12,000 a year. Last month six were signed on, and at the welcoming party editor Sir Nick Lloyd was frank about their role: "Cheap labour."

IS THE dire *Sunday Express* a real newspaper or not? Not seems to be the consensus.

Two weeks ago it was used as a location in the latest Rupert Everett movie, the fourth floor being filled by the film company with actors playing journalists.

As it was a Sunday there was only one "real" *Sunday Express* hack manning the news desk. Sadly, an embarrassed assistant director had to ask the wretch to leave because, he explained, he just didn't look like a real journalist. They should read the paper...

MIRROR Group's promotions director Amanda Platell is widely known as The Airhead. Sadly her performance in the scratch card cock-up has done nothing to dispel the reputation.

The Versace-suited executive spoke up for the paper after more than 100 readers rang a hotline believing they had won £50,000 in an instant-win scratchcard game. Platell has been criticised in the past for saying she finds "the average *Mirror* reader an alien species", and she blamed the readers themselves for making a mistake on the scratchcards. "Those who thought they had won were confused. They didn't understand the rules," she said disdainfully.

Actually it was Platell who cocked up, and a grovelling apology in *The People* revealed the real cause of the mix-up. The *Daily Mirror* of 3 July had referred to a scratch card "in the *People* yesterday". In fact there was no card in the *People* on 2 July, so it was the *Mirror* promotions team, led by Platell, who had been "confused" and "didn't understand the rules".

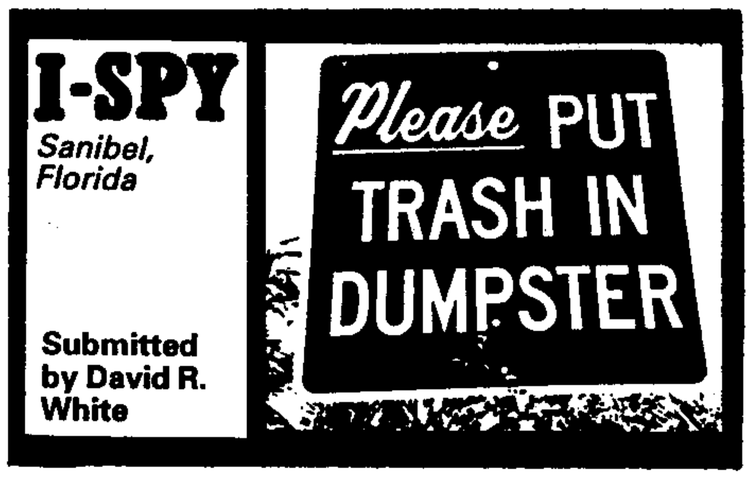
NEW *Observer* editor Andrew Jaspan has hired his old *Scotsman* colleague Ian McWhirter to write a weekly political column. But, as *Observer* readers will know, the paper already has a political columnist in the form of Andrew Rawnsley.

Unsurprisingly, he was none too pleased at finding his place usurped and so raced off to complain to his friend and mentor, *Observer* editor-in-chief Peter Preston.

Preston promptly countermanded Jaspan's edict, ordering him to find some way of keeping Rawnsley in the paper.

Now it was Jaspan's turn to be annoyed. He took his revenge by firing off a letter to Rawnsley telling him to work harder. "As a member of staff," he writes, "I would like you to devote your full energies to the paper, fulfilling your executive duties as Associate Editor." He then lists some of these duties: writing leaders, writing a weekly column "which will aim to be informal, witty and influential", writing up interviews, writing profiles, writing features for the *Life* magazine, writing book reviews and writing news stories. Oh, and "helping me to shape the paper's policy and strategy". The point of all these extra tasks was, of course, to leave Rawnsley with no time in which to pursue his career as a TV presenter.

Since this memo was sent, relations have gone from bad to worse. On the Sunday before the Tory leadership election, Rawnsley wrote a long piece which appeared in the first edition of the *Observer*. In later editions, however, it disappeared without a trace: Jaspan had spiked it. He has now given Rawnsley a final warning, urging him to "buck your ideas up".



ONE of the bitterest departures from the *Daily Mirror* two years ago was that of political editor Alastair Campbell, a close friend of former Labour leader Neil Kinnock.

New chief executive David "Rommel" Montgomery replaced him with rightwinger David Seymour, who had faithfully toadied to Rommel during the latter's editorship of *Today*.

While Campbell was lucky — he was appointed Tony Blair's press secretary when Blair was elected Labour leader — Rommel went on to sack lots of other hacks considered too left-wing for the "left-wing" *Mirror*: people like union members and Labour supporters. One hundred and fifty Labour MPs, shocked by the behaviour, signed a Commons motion condemning the management.

Seymour of course has personal reasons to loathe Labour. Kinnock once lent a holiday cottage (or "love nest" as the tabloids put it) to Labour communications director Dave Hill, who was at the time working on a review of the party's Ugandan policy with Hilary Koffman — aka the former Mrs Seymour. But time is a great healer. Which is why last month a most agreeable dinner in honour of Tony Blair and his lovely wife Cherie took place in a private room at the Savoy — hosted by David Seymour.

Also present were the three Mirror Group editors and their spouses, plus David Montgomery and Alastair Campbell. How refreshing to see old enemies burying the hatchet in the twin causes of electoral and editorial opportunism.

JUST four weeks after *News of the World* editor Piers Morgan berated the impertinent *Evening Standard* for asking about his private life — something the *Screws* would never do, of course — he is waving the trusty sword of truth again.

This time "St Piers" is riding to the rescue of his reporter Ray Levine. Levine has been in Manchester for some months investigating child prostitution, and a 15-year-old girl recruited to assist him in this awful job has now made a number of entirely untrue allegations to the Greater Manchester police about his conduct.

No sooner had a hint of the claims appeared in the *Manchester Evening News* than Morgan called in m'learned friends. It is "disgraceful and scurrilous", he whinges, that papers should print claims of wrongdoing with no proof — something the *News of the World* would never do, either.

In 1990, when working for the *Sunday Sport*, it was Levine who burst into actor Gordon Kaye's intensive care ward brandishing a cucumber. And in 1992 it was Levine who printed David Mellor's private conversations with Antonia de Sancha in *The People*. Clearly the reputation of this Wapping leviathan must be protected at all costs.

FOR several months the offices of the London *Evening Standard* have been a-buzz with rumours about the impending retirement of the paper's editor, Stewart Steven.

His number three, Sarah Sands, who many believe would be his preferred successor, has been despondently telling friends that Steven seems set to leave in November and that her arch-enemy Christina Appleyard will come downstairs from the *Daily Mail* to fill Stevens's shoes, while Sands will walk in the opposite direction and join Paul Dacre's team.

The other candidate on some people's lips is another senior executive on the *Daily Mail*, the donnish Richard Addis, although he may be somewhat too preoccupied assisting his secretary with her burdensome tasks.

Plainly it is time for the rumour-mongers to put up or shut up, and it would be courageous if Steven were to clear the air by resigning and putting himself up for reelection, like his chum John Major. However, there are signs Steven may decide he has had enough. His pension (estimated as being worth £1 million) is due to start paying out on his 60th birthday in November. He is up for membership of the Garrick, and a certain Europhile peer who has been a frequent contributor to the *Standard*'s opinion page has written to Major requesting a knighthood for the slavishly loyal editor.

THE EXPERT'S EXPERT

AS EVER, Fleet Street's finest were on the money when "gauging the mood" of Conservative backbenchers before the leadership election. Here are their tips...

26 June: Boris Johnson, *Daily Telegraph*: "Major will be fatally wounded in the run-off against Redwood. The understanding has imperceptibly hardened among MPs that his time is up. The way is open for Michael Heseltine."

27 June: Michael White, the *Guardian*: "Heseltine (is) poised to snatch the ultimate prize. Major's administration is plunged into a political vortex."

27 June: Richard Littlejohn, *Daily Mail*: "Major's campaign peaked at one minute past five last Thursday. He is already dead in the water."

29 June: Stephen Glover, *Evening Standard*: "Heseltine is in great shape. The most likely outcome is that he will be prime minister in three weeks. By calling an early contest, John Major has brought about his political demise."

29 June: Trevor Kavanagh, *The Sun*: "Major (is) on the way out. Pals admit he's beaten."

30 June: Paul Wilenius, *Today*: "The signs point to an early Major exit. Support for him is not strong enough to stave off a second ballot."

4 July: Er, knock me down with a stalking horse, Major wins first ballot and remains prime minister.

PS: To enhance the humiliation of Grub Street, the one hack who correctly predicted the outcome, in his *News of the World* column, was Woodrow Wyatt. Lord Wyatt of Pisspoor can surely now rely on renewal of his contract as chairman of the Tote so long as John Major is PM.

LIBEL NEWS

WILL John Witherow, editor of the *Sunday Times*, his investigative newshawk David Leppard and his trusty legal adviser Alastair "Blubber" Brett be sacked over the Michael Foot-KGB fiasco? It has ended in a more than usually grovelling apology, substantial damages and even more substantial costs.

The answer in all three cases is likely to be "no". For the man with the power to sack them, News International chief Rupert Murdoch, was himself heavily involved in the fiasco and is desperate to keep his distance from it.

Witherow, who staked his job on the article (and clings on to his job now the article is shown to be rubbish from start to finish), was inclined to continue with what he called "vigorous" resistance of Foot's action had it not been for the unexpected involvement of one R. Murdoch. Foot's writ named Murdoch as chief defendant. His lawyers scurried around getting evidence from former *Sunday Times* editors Frank Giles and Harry Evans, not to mention Lord Dacre, about Murdoch's overweening control of his newspapers, his overruling of his editors and even his breaches of undertakings to ministers.

Tom Kiernan, a Murdoch biographer who was since fallen out with the great man, was even prepared to say in court that Murdoch had told him never to worry about politicians — "just tell them what they want to hear then forget it" was his blunt advice. (This might be noted with caution by Tony Blair as he prepares for his three-day visit to Murdoch's luxury conference in Hayman Island, Australia).

"Blubber" Brett for the *Sunday Times* applied to have Murdoch's name struck out. The fascinating issue as to whether a proprietor can be held responsible for what appears in his newspapers was to be debated in court on 18 May. A few hours before the hearing, "Blubber" begged Foot's lawyers for an adjournment. Surely, he suggested, a settlement could be reached on the whole case without a court hearing. The adjournment was agreed and a settlement including "substantial damages" discussed.

Lord Lester, the *Sunday Times* barrister, could see nothing wrong with "substantial damages" but had to put up with a tirade from "Blubber" who did not agree.

Fed up with the delays, Foot's lawyers had the case put back for 22 June. Once again, just before it came to court, the *Sunday Times* collapsed and agreed the substantial damages. There was a further delay while the shameless Witherow tried to publish the result of the settlement as a scoop in his own paper before the apology was read out in open court. This was obviously unacceptable and the statement was finally read out in court on 7 July.

There were amazing scenes outside the court where, in front of the assembled hacks and cameras, "Blubber" drew on his enormous repertoire of invective and denounced Foot's solicitor David Price as a "fucking cunt". What infuriated Blubber was a press release from Price stressing Rupert Murdoch's involvement in the case. "Blubber" vehemently denied Murdoch had anything to do with the story. Later that afternoon, Jane Reid, Murdoch's press spokeswoman in Britain, put out a statement admitting Murdoch *had* discussed the Gordievsky serialisation and the Foot story before publication.

Meanwhile, Victor Kubeykin, former KGB officer, is considering taking his case to the press complaints commission (PCC). Twice, at huge expense, the *Sunday Times* tried to get Kubeykin to agree that he had backed up the *ST*'s allegations about Foot. Twice, Kubeykin told them what he has told everyone else: that he told David Leppard that Foot was not a KGB agent and that no one in the KGB thought he was — the precise opposite of what Leppard published.

PS: Since the Foot action a number of libel writs have arrived at the *Sunday Times*, the *Times*, the *News of the World*, the *Sun* and *Today*. Unusually, almost all name Rupert Murdoch as a defendant.

HALLO!

THE HEARTWARMING COLUMN

HALLO! LORD Carrington, racing through Windsor to get to the recent Order of the Garter hooley for Lady Thatch, practically mowed down an impertinent traffic warden who had the effrontery to block his path.

Queen Brenda would have taken a dim view of a late arrival as Peter is chancellor of the absurd garter ceremony. Alas, that day the traffic was blocked from using Sheet Street in Windsor due to the changing of the guard.So when traffic warden Lyn Wood stepped in front of his Red Rover, the former foreign secretary summoned his vast diplomatic charm, leapt out and shouted: "Do you know who I am?"

When this failed, the Old Etonian began screaming and became vermilion in the face. Speechless with rage, he then jumped back behind the wheel and tried to nose the obstinate Ms Wood into the kerb. Alas, the impertinent prole stood her ground and His Lordship had to find another way into the castle.

HALLO! *MORE evidence emerges of the plot to drive the Princess of Wales mad.*

On a recent visit to Canterbury to present new colours to the Princess of Wales Royal Regiment, a special ladies' powder room was set aside. "The Tigers" had made sure their colonel-in-chief would enjoy her own private throne-room, and no expense was spared.

There was even a huge photograph of Di on Ladies Day at Ascot. Shame, that in the tightly-packed throng the only other face that was clearly visible, just two feet away, belonged to Camilla Parker Bowles.

HALLO! TO LONDON's Greek Orthodox church, elbowing my way through a rabble of deposed European monarchs, for the wedding of Crown Prince Pavlos, son of ex-king Constantine of Greece, to zillionaire's daughter Marie-Chantal Miller.

Afterwards, at the grand lunch at Hampton Court, I notice Selina Scott is placed next to Prince Charles. They remain locked in deep conversation throughout the vulgarly lavish wedding feast.

Could Wales be considering another disastrous "confession to the nation" via TV? If so, he's in safe hands. Selina, of course, has become far more regal than the Windsors.

"It's you… but you'll have to spend two years on a waiting list"

HALLO! POOR old Lord Palumbo. Trying to flog his Berkshire estate for £10 million, the former Arts Council chairman has been praying that the controversial Newbury by-pass, 400 yards from his front door, would be scrapped.

Oddly, £10 million is exactly the figure Palumbo borrowed from the family trust to pay business debts. This led — along with a £13 million spree on cars, wines, entertaining Princess Diana, etc — to son James and daughter Annabella taking a high court action out against their father.

In the resulting deal Peter was virtually stripped of control over the £70 million trust and three new trustees are examining past expenditure (including a £263,000 donation to the Tories). Meanwhile Palumbo's second wife Hayat has been boasting that the long-projected by-pass plan had finally been dumped, and recently their very own Boswell, Nigel Pratt-Dumpster, enthused in the *Daily Mail*: "That road has now been shelved."

Er, not exactly. In his final act as minister of transport, Brian Mawhinney gave the go ahead for the by-pass — knocking millions off His Lordship's asking price.

HALLO! CLASS warrior Auberon Waugh is clearly terrified of joining the ranks of the hated unemployed. Wealthy Naim Attallah-Disgusting is pulling out as backer of Waugh's waffling *Literary Review*, and the sobbing editor has been begging friends for introductions to imbecilic millionaires.

Perhaps Waugh will have to fall back on his cushy job organizing *The Spectator* wine club. Recently the great man boasted about a Lebanese claret he had discovered, discounting it to members for £7.40 a bottle. One member, who could obtain the same wine 30p cheaper elsewhere, was surprised his letter of protest to the magazine never surfaced.

"Part of my condition for doing the *Spectator*'s wine club," gloated Waugh, "was that letters of complaint would never be published."

HALLO! *IT HAS not been a good month for giddy social fixer Liz Brewer. First she was dropped as London ambassador and chief of staff for the brilliant Ivana Trump. This followed the hilarious TV documentary, The Fame Game, which chronicled their exciting lives.*

Now I hear of a tantrum from the social editor of a rival magazine, ludicrously named Hello. Invited to the same launch party as Brewer, John Rendell thundered: "How dare they invite me to a do with my ex-wife!"

Liz Brewer is 54.

HALLO! TO THE Cambridge Theatre for the first night of the musical *Fame*, where I sit behind the late Robert Morley's portly son, Sheridan.

Alas the Marquesa cannot see a thing over Sheridan's large head. But luckily the fearsome critic, occupying a seat in the middle of Row K, eventually slumps forward. Beside him, wife and fellow critic Ruth scribbles furiously, while Sherry seems distinctly tired.

Doubtless it was the Marquesa, however, who was dreaming: for there in last week's *Spectator* was Sheridan's acerbic review. "Irredeemable schmaltz," he blasted.

'The Marquesa'

IN THE TEAROOM

A GROUP of hard-faced men met last week at the business end of the tearoom to talk serious political turkey. They were scornfully insouciant of the idle post-reshuffle chat of the MPs around them.

They didn't give a damn that the prime minister must have gone soft in the head to send hapless Jeremy Hanley to gaffe for Britain at the foreign office. They couldn't be bothered about the outrageous appointment of charmless, pig-ignorant, talentless brown-nosing James Clappison as parliamentary under-secretary at environment instead of the charming, able, experienced Peter Ainsworth. They weren't even impressed by Hezza's chums who were loudly boasting about the length and width of the new deputy PM's responsibilities, as if the word "portfolio" were Tory slang for penis. Sorry, just not interested.

These men were talking helicopters. The army is set to order a new model and the extent of ferocious, partisan, fully-paid-up lobbying going on in Westminster corridors at the moment would be enough to make Lord Nolan blush at his own naiveté.

The arms business, like Europe, can always be relied on to cause spiteful divisions among backbench Tories. Once again the choice is between a US-backed Westland machine — old, a bit cranky, but cheap — and a hi-tech, state of the art number made by a Euro-consortium, this time including British Aerospace.

One theory has it that Hezza will fix it that the Eurotiger prevails over the Westland, thereby taking revenge on Mrs Thatcher by humiliating her anointed favourite, defence secretary Michael Portillo, who'll be honour-bound to storm out of cabinet squawking about market forces.

'Urquhart'

MICHAEL PORTILLO's move to the ministry of defence was more Machiavellian than it might appear.

The first politically charged decision John Major's right-wing challenger-in-waiting will have to make is likely to be an embarrassing U-turn on where Britain's Trident submarines will be refitted.

Readers may recall that in 1993 Plymouth's Devonport dockyard was chosen in preference to the Rosyth yard in Scotland, which refits Polaris submarines, amid uproar that the decision was politically motivated. There are more Tory seats to protect in the West Country than in Scotland, after all.

However, the farcical downward leap-frogging of bids that led to Devonport winning the contract with an offer to build the new facilities required for Trident for £235 million has been exposed as the sham it always was.

DML, the private manager of Devonport, has now submitted to the MoD a massive document on costings for the new works. It shows that the cost of the proposal put to the MoD in 1993 has risen by 25 percent. Changes to the specifications required by the ministry would then put the price up even higher. The final bill is sure to be well over £300 million — against £267 million bid by Rosyth.

Meanwhile DML is struggling to convince the nuclear installations inspectorate (NII) that its proposal to revamp old second world war docks for the refitting operations is safe. Two years later, it is only at the second of six stages in the safety case procedure. Without a safety case approved by NII the project cannot go ahead. Rosyth already has an approved safety case.

Portillo may be tempted to prevaricate until the election, after which a Labour government would have no compunction in reassigning the contract to Rosyth. It is, after all, in Gordon Brown's constituency.

A LEADING campaigner for John Redwood was none other than Barry Legg, the MP for Milton Keynes South West, who nodded sagely as Deadwood tore into waste, inefficiency and corruption in local government.

Legg would know all about wasteful, inefficient and corrupt councils: for seven years before being elected to parliament he was Dame Shirley Porter's chief whip on Westminster city council.

He is also one of nine people facing possible surcharge after being identified by district auditor John Magill as one of the ruling group that drove through the so-called gerrymandering policies of flogging off council flats in marginal wards to increase the potential Tory vote.

THE resignation of Jonathan Aitken from the cabinet post of chief secretary to the treasury for the avowed reason of wanting to concentrate on libel actions against the *Grauniad* and Granada's *World In Action* should not lead anyone to suppose Aitken feels he has a weak case.

At a recent party he was maintaining a bullish attitude towards both his adversaries. In particular he referred to a fragment of the *World In Action* programme which appeared to question the propriety of his being visited at his Lord North Street residence by a Lebanese arms dealer while he was minister for defence procurement.

"I'll think you'll find that the evidence relating to that matter will have to be heard in camera," he suggested, implying that for reasons of national security the press will be prevented from reporting that phase of the proceedings.

THE top people's campaign against Sir Richard Scott and his inquiry into British arms sales to Iraq, continues apace.

On *Any Questions* on 30 June, Sir Bernard Ingham, Mrs Thatcher's former press secretary, said the inquiry had been a big mistake. He said Scott was the "wettest and most liberal judge they could find — and also the most exhibitionist one, too".

Ingham was attempting to answer a question about whether ministers who deceive parliament should resign. Another panel member, William Waldegrave, exposed on countless occasions as having deceived parliament about the changing of the arms-to-Iraq guidelines in 1988, said yes he should — but that didn't include himself who had done nothing wrong.

Mr Waldegrave also expressed the old-fashioned democratic view that this was "an extraordinary question to have on this programme".

"Is there an OAP discount?"

TONY BLAIR's obsession with Tory newspaper proprietors does not stop at Rupert Murdoch.

On 18 July the Labour party hosts a glamorous media conference at the Queen Elizabeth Centre, entitled *Twenty-First Century Communications*. The guest speakers are mainly media businessmen and tycoons, and they include Lord Donoughue of Astor, former boardroom colleague of famous Labour proprietor Robert Maxwell.

None of the media unions will be represented, however — perhaps because the star speaker is "Sir" David English, editor-in-chief of the *Daily Mail* who recently sacked sub-editor David Wilson for being a union official.

The conference organiser is Chris Smith from the Labour frontbench. His constituency party is part-sponsored by the broadcasting union BECTU — and it isn't invited either.

BARCLAYS Bank is looking forward to getting its first footing inside the parliamentary Labour party.

Derek Scott is favourite to become candidate for Worcester, which looks like a probable Labour win at the next election. He is currently director, European economics for BZW, aka Barclays de Zoete Wedd, the investment banking arm of Barclays.

It will be Scott's third try at getting his bottom on to the green leather benches. But on the other two occasions he fought against Labour. He was SDP candidate in Swindon, splitting the vote in 1983 and 1987 and turning a safe Labour seat into a Tory win.

He then rejoined Labour and has been appointed by Tony Blair as his economics adviser. The man who lost the Swindon seat, David Stoddart, is now a Labour peer, spitting fury about Scott who would be well advised to stay clear of dark corridors near the Lords.

LABOUR MP Michael Meacher never ceases to prove what a good socialist he is — particularly when it comes to dealing with his employees.

He has just sacked his press officer-researcher Sarah Goodall after only 12 months and has advertised her post in the *Guardian* at £4,000 a year less than he was paying her. The National Union of Journalists has refused to accept the advert in *The Journalist* because of his caddish behaviour.

Meacher had praised Ms Goodall for her work only a fortnight before giving her the boot. The first she knew of the "vacancy" was when she opened the *Grauniad*

'Backbiter'

MAGIC EYE CABINET

STARE AT THIS IMAGE OF DEADBEATS UNTIL YOU BEHOLD A MAGICAL NEW TEAM OF WINNERS!

NOOKS and CORNERS

WITH much fanfare, Apsley House, "No 1 London" at Hyde Park Corner, the metropolitan home of the great Duke of Wellington, has been reopened to the public after "an extensive programme of renovation and refurbishment" costing £6.4 million.

"One of the aims of this extensive project has been to return the interior to the way it would have looked during the time of the first Duke of Wellington," announced Stephen Dorrell, the outgoing secretary of state for national heritage, at the official opening.

And in the revised guidebook, Elizabeth Esteve-Coll, departing director of the Victoria & Albert Museum (which administers the Wellington Museum), states: "In line with museum policy the opportunity has also been taken to return the interior of the house, as far as possible, to its appearance in the time of the first duke."

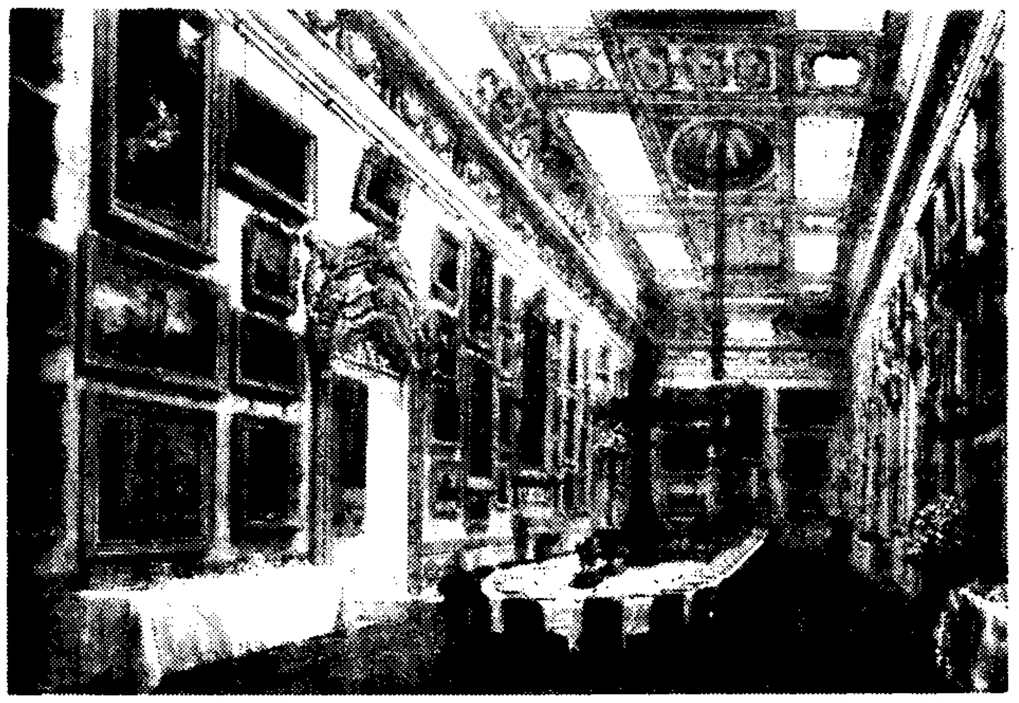
Now this, as her smug and sinister chairman of the V&A's obedient and hopeless bunch of trustees, that epitome of Perfidious Albion My Lord Armstrong might say, is being economical with the truth.

Readers may have been surprised by newspaper photographs of the reopening of Apsley House showing Dame Elizabeth — the most honoured and most disastrous director of the V&A since its foundation — sharing a joke with Mr Dorrell in the Waterloo Gallery, for they revealed that this great room looks exactly as it did before the sudden and unexpected closure of Apsley House in 1992.

The walls are still hung in red damask, although we know that the Iron Duke, against advice, covered the walls in his favourite yellow silk; the paintings are not hung on chains as they were originally — as shown in one of the precise watercolour views of the interior made after Wellington's death in 1852; and the carpet rewoven in 1978 still looks like one from a large suburban lounge as it still does not have the border which again is clearly shown in the 1852 picture.

This may seem trivial, but a restoration endorsed by the V&A surely should be concerned with historical accuracy and truth. Yes, new fabric has been hung in the Piccadilly Drawing Room and the Striped Drawing Room; curtains have been rehung; china cabinets in the Dining Room corridor have been removed to expose windows inserted in the 1960s; the walls of the staircase have been repainted and more of that carpet put round the base of Canova's astonishing Nude Napoleon. But even the bill for 300 metres of special silk being handwoven on 1820s handlooms surely cannot have come near to £6 million.

So where has the money gone? Behind the scenes, we are told, "roofs, heating systems and wiring were replaced and a new air-handling plant installed..." Perhaps kitchens as well, for we read that "Apsley House will be made available for a limited number of corporate hospitality events" (the real reason for the vulgarising of the Queen's House at Greenwich a few years ago). But at £6.4 million?



The Waterloo Gallery; watercolour by Joseph Nash, 1852.

For comparison it is worth noting that the meticulously planned and historically accurate restoration of Sir John Soane's Museum, which did not require the exclusion of the public and which also involved the replacement of complicated roofs and skylights, cost a mere £2.5 million — much of it raised privately.

The "refurbishment" of Apsley House was commissioned by the department of national heritage (the house was given to the nation in 1947 by that admirable architect, the 7th Duke, better known as the "Iron Duchess") which, for some reason, chose to give the work to Unicorn Consultancy, "part of Building and Property, the UK's largest facilities management company."

The consultant architect was someone called Dante Vanoli, about whom I know nothing. All I can say is that, after more than three years of closure and the expenditure of huge sums of public money, visitors to Apsley House might be forgiven for assuming that practically nothing has changed. Such is accountability and expertise in post-Thatcherite Britain. And, *pace* the new vice-chancellor of the unfortunate University of East Anglia, to claim that Apsley House has been restored to its appearance in the time of the Iron Duke while the Waterloo Gallery remains unaltered is, quite simply, a fraud.

I SUPPOSE we must be grateful that the ubiquitous Anthony "Twee" Blee [Eyes passim ad nauseam] was not made consultant architect. As described in the last Eye, Blee has wangled himself the job of dealing with poor old St Ethelburga's, Bishopsgate, while his career as the successor to Hugh Casson as a professional rubbisher of historic buildings flourishes.

As part of the government's policy of undermining our historic building legislation, Stephen Dorrell has put the latest recommendations for post-war listing out to "consultation" and the owners of selected buildings have bounced back with objections, so often accompanied, interestingly enough, by a "report" from Anthony Blee Consultants.

And now, I hear, Blee is acting for the egregious Teresa Gorman MP (Con), in her battle with brave Thurrock borough council over her barbaric and illegal alterations to Old Hall Farmhouse at Orsett, about which you read here first. Goodness knows what Blee thinks he knows about late medieval timber-framed houses, but no doubt his busy researchers can dig up something to comfort Essex Woman. And no doubt she can afford the fee.

'Piloti'

Pseuds Corner

Reminded that a Keanu Reeves film class is being taught at Art Center College of Design in Pasadena, California, he says: "I guess I'm not really involving my imagination to that of a circumstance or happening — I'm just kind of acknowledging it as an existence."

KEANU REEVES
WHO Weekly (Australia)

Q. What living thing do you care most about?

A. Myself. You have to love yourself before being able to appreciate anyone else.

Q. Who would you least like to be shipwrecked on a desert island with?

A. Because I see people as mirrors of myself, I'd hate to be marooned with myself in a negative mood.

Q. What, for you, is the secret of happiness?

A. To love yourself whatever you do, wherever you are, and whoever you are with.

'ZABE' (Capital Radio weather girl)
Today

When I was very first with him [Nicholas Cage], eight years ago, I could not look at him for more than a milli-second in the eye. It was too awesome for me. It was so honest. I felt too exposed. It was X-ray vision to my soul. I felt I had to learn so much, but after this movie I did feel I knew I was a woman. Ethically, I knew how I was going to be in a relationship and what I was and was not going to accept in someone else. I was ready to take a chance, with a man I really respected. And he is the only man I have ever really, really respected. That is a horrible thing to say. The people I have been with I have loved but I believe in him in this greater sort of forever, dignity and nobility way.

PATRICIA ARQUETTE
Observer

The political attempt to suppress our video documentary, Executions, is the greatest threat to freedom of expression in Britain in the last 10 years. In a 1990s version of Nazi bookburning, ignorant politicians have combined with international lobbyists for tyrannical regimes to keep the public from viewing the truth.

Executions is a thought-provoking documentary based on intense academic research into the history of capital punishment. It follows the development of the theory that execution could be made "humane" by the use of scientific techniques. It explains how politicians abused those so-called "humane" execution techniques for political ends, in Nazi Germany and elsewhere.

The efforts of politicians and lobbyists to keep citizens ignorant of the reality of capital punishment through the suppression of this documentary must be fought by every believer in democracy and free expression.

DAVID HERMAN, DAVID MONAGHAN, ARUN KUMAR
Letter to The Guardian

The portrait photograph may function as an apotropaic image, warding off the death of the onlooker. Precisely because the image, both still and moving, contains the illusion of life needlessly prolonged (Bonnie and Clyde are forever fooling around with the rifle, Marilyn still wiggles and giggles) it defies the mutability of death. In this the photographic portrait can be placed in a category of images which are also liminal, suspended in an inbetween state, neither dead nor alive: the saint's preserved remains, the death mask, the waxworks of famous quasi-mythic personages and the anatomical replica of the functioning human body. These media of physical representation draw on the long western aesthetic of verisimilitude through naturalistic imitation; the simulacrum, the living or speaking likeness.

MARINA WARNER
'Stealing Souls and Catching Shadows', Tate magazine

I can glance at my watch and know exactly what the time is, just by the position of the hands.

SIR NORMAN FOSTER
Rolex advertisement

Contributors: S. Walsh, A. Carrington, P. Harvey, J. Bradley, A. Summers, L. Stirk.

£10 paid for entries

TV

Panorama (BBC1)

Conservative Leadership Election (BBC1)

ONE of John Birt's campaign promises to the BBC governors who appointed him director-general was that he would sort out the corporation's current affairs coverage. Judging from the mess his team made of putting the Tory leadership election on screen, it's probably as well Birt is unlikely to seek a second term.

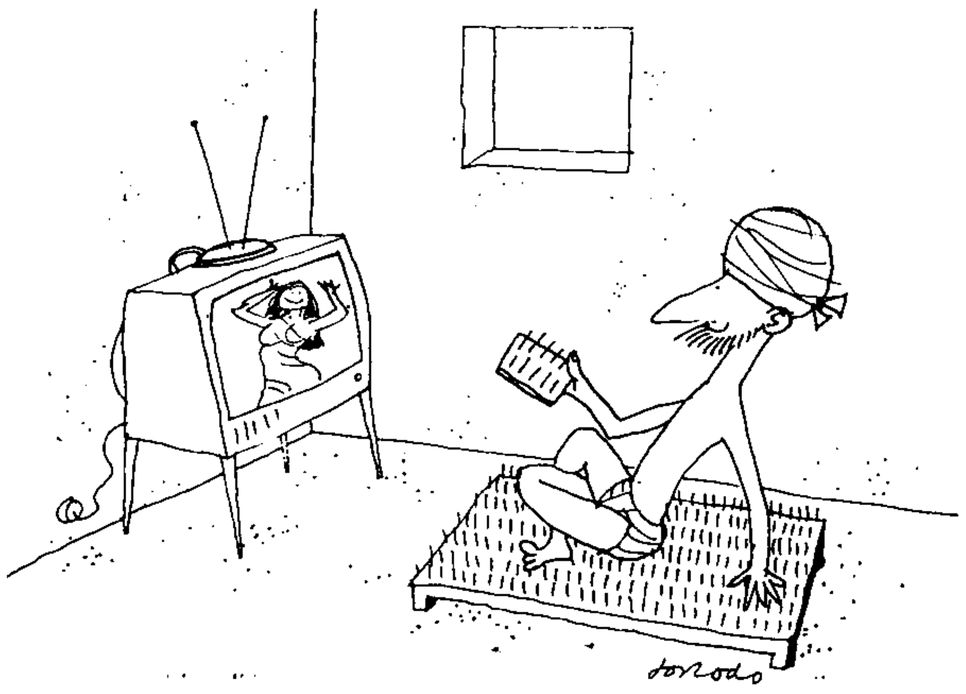
Like many campaign promises, his looks to be in shreds. The Major v. Redwood programming embarrassingly showcased the two central disfigurements Birtism has brought to BBC current affairs: formatitis and cowardice/credulity.

It's said that the highest possible praise to be found on an executive memo at Television Centre these days is "great format". The most common soundbite from senior suits is "Television is about formats". As a result, far more effort now goes into the structure of programmes than into their content. The *Panorama* (BBC1) on the eve of the leadership vote was the classic example of a format gone mad.

There was a traditional anchorman: indeed, they don't come much more traditional than David Dimbleby. He had a desk, although, in the first formatting innovation, he was not allowed merely to sit at it. He began the programme standing away from it and was also required to walk around the set at random moments. Facing him in a *Mastermind*-style hot seat was John Redwood and, similarly arranged, Brian Mawhinney, filling in for John Major, who had declined to appear.

Once, a few years ago, a *Panorama* could plausibly have consisted solely of Dimbleby interviewing these two politicians. But the gods of formatting could not now be thus appeased and so Dimbleby was flanked by two *Have I Got News For You?*-style interviewing panels each consisting of two backbench Tory MPs — Barry Legge and Ian Duncan-Smith on one side, and Sir Norman Fowler and David Mellor on the other — who would respectively interview the candidate from the opposite wing of the party to the one they themselves represented.

Even this, though, might be insufficiently "busy" (another BBC buzzword) for a 40-minute broadcast and so, on screens at either side of the stage, Dimbleby had access to panels of voters in two representative constituencies. Oh, and there was a studio audience as well, also promised that they too would have the chance to quiz the candidates.



Some credit must be given to the BBC. Until quite recently Major could have killed off the whole programme simply by declining to appear alongside the challenger. So there was some courage in continuing with a proxy. And plaudits must go to the malicious producer who came up with the black joke that allegedly sensible, mainstream Toryism would be represented in the studio by the mad nerd Norman Fowler and the sleazy nerd David Mellor. As political journalism, though, the show was a disaster. Scarcely would an idea be half-developed when Dimbleby would have to shout "I'm going to bring in Faversham here. Can you hear me, Faversham?" or "Yes, you, madam, the lady in the green blouse!"

Dimbleby was back on BBC1 for the actual result, and it was clear the gods of formatting still wanted further sacrifice. For this broadcast, as well as the various Tory suits beside him in the studio and the various Lances, Marks and Jeremies of the BBC political staff wired up outside significant front doors in the SW1 area, Dimbleby also had access to panels of voters in the candidates' constituencies, Huntingdon and Wokingham. But the format was ahead of the technology and the anchor was at one point forced to say: "We can't hear you, Wokingham, but apparently you can hear us. Raise your hands if you agree with the point just made!"

Though the broadcast possessed this vast eco-skeleton of formats, the problem was its intellectual spinelessness. Majorites were permitted an unchallenged platform for their contention, after the result, that this was a triumph for him. Indeed, an uninformed viewer might have assumed that Robin Oakley — all smiles and his face showing something that might easily have been mistaken for relief — was another Tory MP rather than the BBC political editor.

Oakley and other correspondents also parroted without opposition the idea that Major's result was the "same percentage of the vote Tony Blair won in his leadership election": a totally fallacious comparison — between an open election and an invited vote of confidence in an incumbent leader — that had originally been floated by Major's lackeys. Birt's knighthood or peerage should be assured.

'Square Eyes'

MEDIA NEWS

NICHOLAS "Poisoned Carrot" Witchell, the former Breakfast TV presenter best known for crossing picket lines and wrestling with lesbians, is odd-jobbing around Television Centre and Broadcasting House in search of a new career.

While his fellow hacks queue daily outside interview rooms, scrabbling for jobs, lucky Witchell has been summarily appointed "diplomatic correspondent with the emphasis on radio" while still managing to top up as understudy to newsreaders on the *News at One*, the *Six O'Clock News*, the *Nine O'Clock News* and *Breakfast Television*.

The fact is his exasperated bosses don't know what to do with him. He caused a near-mutiny at the Beeb a couple of years ago when he managed to short-circuit the supposedly incorruptible "interview board" system by announcing that he had "decided to return to reporting" after eight years of reading the autocue on *Breakfast Time*. He was duly named as the next Middle East correspondent. But then his girlfriend declared that she had no intention of abandoning Knightsbridge for some sand-swept dump, and Witchell's enthusiasm for going back on the road quickly evaporated.

Anxious to get the unpopular little man out of Breakfast Television in favour of supercilious new favourite Justin Webb, news and current affairs boss Tony "Head Prefect" Hall wangled Witchell a job as a *Panorama* reporter. But *Panorama* is a bastion of old-style BBC current affairs culture, and the Carrot found himself being ignored. Hence his new assignment as diplomatic correspondent cum newsreader.

Amusingly enough, Witchell is now being held up to the BBC's resentful hacks as a perfect example of a "bi-medial, multi-skilled" employee. His colleagues prefer to describe him in rather earthier language.

GEORGINA Littlejohn, daughter of Richard "Live and Uncut" Littlejohn, the gorblimey writer and presenter, seems to be following in daddy's footsteps.

She is working as a junior at a showbiz news agency, where one of her assignments was to go to Liz Hurley's house and pose outside in a rather lewd t-shirt which pictured Hugh Grant above the witty caption: "Four Weddings and a Hooker".

Unfortunately only one media man took an interest in the provocative t-shirt and Georgina coyly gave him a false name. Perhaps her father, who interviews Page Three girls and loves espousing yobbish opinions, is not so broad-minded under his own roof.

THE pisspoor new "all-female" radio station VIVA celebrated its launch with a stunt in which 963 women did "extraordinary things" such as bungee-jumping, double somersaults etc etc. (The station's wavelength is 963 — *geddit*?)

One of the performers booked for the occasion was magician Fay Presto, who was due to give a conjuring display in Covent Garden. Alas! At the last moment, the organisers realised la Presto is in fact a trans-sexual. She was hastily dropped.

RADIO 4's flagship *Today* show loves to tell its listeners that "earlier in the programme the minister revealed that..." And it was to this end that broadcaster Peter Hobday was recently told to get an exclusive line out of a particularly dull politician in time for the 8am news bulletin.

The long-serving Hobday, however, had different ideas. He turned on his dismayed editor and said it was not his job to generate sensational headlines but to do a proper interview, with in-depth questions.

His stand for journalistic integrity went down well at high-brow Radio 4. The next day Hobday was called in for a chat with BBC bigwigs and was told that his hours on air were to be cut by half.

WORLD ??? OF WINE

THE *Guardian* has been so busy exposing sleaze in government circles that it appears not to have noticed the extra-curricular activities of its own wine correspondent, Malcolm Gluck.

A Johnny-come-lately to the wine business, Gluck made his reputation as an advertising copywriter, where he was best known for creating a campaign in which a Domestos bottle with arms and legs marched around to the tune of "Big Dom".

He has readily transferred his copywriting skills to wine journalism. One recommendation in his "Superplonk" column is usually enough for a wine to disappear from supermarket shelves, and his *Superplonk* guides to supermarket wines have been selling 70,000 copies a year. He recently left his original publishers Faber & Faber for Hodder Headline, who have given him an advance in the region of £400,000 for a three-year deal.

Is there no limit to the man's talents? Apparently not. Last month he devoted the one and a half pages of his *Grauniad* column to just two wines, a red and a white, which he had created himself under the "Superplonk" name and were available for £2.99 each from Tesco. What he had sought to produce, he wrote, was "supreme drinkability: wines which you could open and drink any time for the sheer pleasure of the fruit".

Gluck's involvement with the wines was not quite as personal as his readers may have imagined. It wasn't as if he had actually made them: Tesco had found him a company to provide the wines, a Spanish outfit called Gandia. All that Gluck did was to blend the contents of various vats of wine in differing proportions.

Gluck's commercial interest in the wines, on the other hand, was rather closer than he let on. Nowhere in his *Guardian* article did he mention that he was taking a commision on every case sold. Gluck has since defended this arrangement on the grounds that he needed to be repaid for his time and trouble; yet he refused the *Guardian*'s offer of a flat fee. Although he insists that he is receiving only a "tiny royalty" some experts in the trade believe that he may make as much as £25,000 from the venture.

Meanwhile, the *Grauniad* — which is so severe on MPs who have "outside interests" — may care to explain how Gluck can still be regarded as an impartial commentator on supermarket wines when he has entered into a commercial arrangement with one of the principal objects of his scrutiny.

Private I-I-I!

THIS ISSUE'S rundown of the nation's most self-obsessed columnists, based on the number of incidences of the word "I" per column-inch.

		Ego Rating
1	Zoë Heller (Sunday Times 9/7)	2.37
2	Michael Winner (Sunday Times 9/7)	2.14
3	John Major (News of the World 2/7)	1.77
4	Magnus Linklater (Times 23/6)	1.76
5	Margaret Drabble (D. Telegraph 8/7)	1.67
6	A.A. Gill (Sunday Times 2/7)	1.50
7	Joan Smith (IoS 9/7)	1.36
8	John Major (D. Telegraph 3/7)	1.12
9	Bernard Levin (Times 27/6)	0.91
10	Nigella Lawson (Times 4/7)	0.80

Bubblin' under: Gilbert Adair, Ian Jack, John Diamond, Esther Rantzen.

ARTS NEWS

THERE is little chance of poetic South Wales ever producing another Ifor Davies or Dylan Thomas if the Welsh Arts Council has anything to do with it.

The heavily-hyped Valleys Live festival, for example, spent £750,000 on events, including £20,000 squandered on "singing the Valleys in Aboriginal song". In the Taff-Ely area, almost the entire literature budget was spent on Benjamin Zephaniah, the, er, well-known South Wales poet. local poets were completely excluded. Only £15,000 of Taff-Ely's £55,000 budget went on local artists and writers, and the festival was overwhelmingly condemned in the local press.

Interestingly, a study of Arts Council grants reveals that members of the "combined arts panel" in south-east Wales are often involved in the organisations who receive the Arts Council money. Julia Davies was a member of the panel between 1990 and 1993. She was also the administrator of Gwent Theatre — a community company which got £63,694 from the panel in 1990/93. Valleys Arts Marketing gets £100,000 a year from the Welsh Arts Council and other funding agencies. Angela Tillcock, its director, sits on the panel.

Welsh Arts Council accounts are also interesting for what they don't reveal. Members of the south-east Wales combined arts panel like Francesca Kay and Peter Florence have also received grants — but the amounts have not been disclosed.

To avoid accusations of impropriety, the Welsh Arts Council claims that even though its members are involved in organisations that receive grants, the groups themselves are "third parties" who are permitted to receive funds. So that's all right, then: clearly there is no breach of the council's code of practice which promises to "observe the highest standards of impartiality, integrity and objectivity in relation to the stewardship of public funds".

Meanwhile "alien" organisations such as the untrendy but widely respected Parc & Dare brass band got nothing, and Treorchy Male Voice Choir, with an international following, got all of £200.

HACKWATCH: WAPPING SCOOPS

SINCE winning the "Scoop of the Year" award in February, *Sunset Times* editor John Witherow has been desperate for more. But the only real exclusive he's published since then has been the "revelation" that Michael "six-figure damages" Foot was a KGB spy.

Last month at the *ST* "investigative" hack Mark Skipworth was promoted to news editor. He spent his first week in the newsroom chanting an obsessive mantra at weary hacks: "Exclusives, exclusives. All I want is exclusives!" Skipworth's first issue, on 2 July, was indeed *packed* with exclusives. Other people's.

On page 3, the paper disclosed that the Royal Opera House had "betrayed" Prince Charles by deciding to sell off to a burger-bar dressing rooms that the Prince of Wales had raised the money to build. This story bore a remarkable similarity to an identical (and genuine) scoop which appeared in the *Evening Standard*'s Londoner's Diary on 20 June.

On page 6, *Sunset* hacks reported that "Queue forms for capitalist Utopia", a Hong Kong-style business park to be built in the jungles of South America. Funnily enough, this free trade paradise had already been revealed (with identical photograph) in the *Independent on Sunday* two weeks earlier on 18 June.

Page 11 carried Taki Lotsofdoshdownthedrain's report on the Greek royal wedding the day before. Sadly "Tacky" couldn't find anything to say that hadn't been reported in the *Daily Mail*, the *Daily Express* or the *Daily Mirror*. He did carry one story not carried elsewhere. Yet another apology (to Prince Paul of Romania this time) for a previous blunder.

On page 19 readers were treated to the "revelation" that Hillary Clinton "has repackaged herself as a newspaper columnist". This, of course, bore no relation to the story four days earlier in the *Daily Express* revealing that "First Lady Hillary Clinton is launching a new career as a newspaper columnist".

Then on **page 21**, foreign reporter Christina Lamb divulged that former Malawi president Kenneth Kaunda "is being hailed as Africa's comeback kid". This piece was in no way inspired by the *Independent*'s 29 June report headed "Kaunda makes a comeback".

Page 26 revealed *two* revelations. First, the Pope has approved a plan to admit married Church of England priests to the Roman Catholic Church. This had nothing to do with a *Daily Telegraph* story three days earlier which reported that Rome was to "welcome married clergy". Similarly uninspired by other sources was the, er, "splash", that water companies are awash with profits while supplies dry up across the country. The pay rises cited for bosses from South West Water, Thames Water and North West Water are strikingly identical, although of course unconnected to the self-same figures revealed in *Today* and the *Daily Mirror* the day before.

The Business section ran one strong news piece on its front page: "Bank set to point finger at Baring's executives". This is a quite different story (well, quite a different headline anyway) from the *Telegraph*'s "Bank of England Baring's report expected to be critical of management" published days earlier.

One exposé at least hadn't appeared anywhere in the previous month. Reporter Christopher Lloyd revealed that children are now able to access pornography on the Internet. It hadn't appeared in the previous *month*, but it had been reported in the *Independent on Sunday* on 6 September last year, in the *Daily Telegraph* last December, in the *Times* on 28 December and once again in the *Daily Telegraph* on 19 March.

So were there *any* genuine exclusives in Skipworth's first issue? Well, yes. On the whole of page five the *ST* reported that housing charity Shelter has spent £5 million on "lavish" "new" headquarters near the City of London. In fact the charity last year bought the freehold of the former Smithfield warehouse it had occupied since 1986, saving its donors £50,000 a year. Shelter is now consulting m'learned friends.

POP EYE

THE pop pages of the *Daily Record* have been dancing to a different tune since Terry Quinn took over as the Glasgow paper's editor.

First, glam pop writer Debbie Jackson was given her marching orders after appearing in a state of undress in an advert for a trendy shoe shop. Debbie, who had changed her name from the uncool Smith to the hardly cooler Jackson to improve her image, is now scraping by at the *Sun* where old friends unkindly remember her bragging about partying with the stars at the MTV awards.

Back at the *Record* Quinn seems to be taking an older swinger under his wing. The ageing hipster and ex-pop writer Billy Sloan has made a reappearance. He left the *Record* under a cloud a few years ago after the *Sun* exposed his practice of selling freebies and promos at Glasgow record fairs.

DOING THE ROUNDS

MRS Bottomley's last gasp announcement as health secretary that the intake to medical schools is to be increased by 10 percent by the year 2000 may have come too late to solve the medical manpower crisis.

It costs £192,000 of taxpayers' money to train a medical graduate, but up to a quarter of newly qualified doctors now give up or disappear abroad. Many parts of the NHS only function thanks to the efforts of overseas doctors who occupy 26 percent of the training grades.

In some specialties such as anaesthetics, psychiatry, paediatrics and general practice, there are often no applicants for jobs advertised in the *British Medical Journal*. Increasing the student intake is unlikely to have any effect if the working conditions remain so poor. As one of this year's Birmingham graduates put it: "When I first went on the wards in 1992, all the junior doctors told me to give up now and all the consultants said it would be all right in the end. Now everyones telling me to get out."

Just as alarming is the national shortage of consultants. There are 150 national consultant vacancies in anaesthetics alone, with trusts resorting to headhunting, poaching, overseas recruitment and inflated salaries to fill posts. Dr Julia Moore, clinical director of anaesthetics at **Merseyside's Wirral trust**, claims trusts are no longer advertising vacancies in the UK because they know there will be no replies. As health minister Gerry Malone put it: "I disagree with the words manpower crisis."

"Chief executives are finding that when recruiting for executives, there is a distinct lack of breadth of non-functional experience and skills." So said Chris Bramford, assistant director of personnel at **Western area health trust**. Loosely translated, there aren't many senior managers about who want — or are good enough — to be recruited into top NHS posts.

● THE ever present shortage of specialist beds in **south-east England** has again been highlighted by a helicopter dash, on this occasion from **Berkshire's Wexham Park hospital** to **Cardiff's University hospital**. Happily the patient, a 68-year-old man with a severe heart condition, survived the 120 mile trip.

● **LONDON's King's hospital** has launched a snappy "Always and Everyone" charity appeal to fund services and equipment in its casualty department. The current government allocation of £1.4 million is not enough to fund all the life support machines, heart defibrillators, child resuscitation equipment and other optional extras that the department needs.

● "THE standards of agency nurses over the last few months have been appalling," said staff nurse Siobhan Larkin at the inquest into the accidental death of 73-year-old man at **Londons North Middlesex hospital** (*Eyes passim*). Joseph Mann drowned in his bath, unable to reach the alarm cord above him which had broken and was tied back out of the way. The ward itself had not had a sister on duty for three weeks, reflecting both a national shortage of oncology sisters and a reluctance to employ more expensive, better trained staff.

● VALERIE TOMLINSON, the theatre sister who helped remove an appendix at **Cornwall's Treliske hospital**, has taken early retirement shortly after her reinstatement. "On my first day back, managers told me I was lucky to keep my job because people had been complaining about me. Colleagues who had never said anything to me claimed I was difficult to get along with, had been breaking the rules and was not a good role model. Much of this hostility was prompted by my willingness to challenge illogical rules."

● RAY BROWN, a consultant ophthalmologist at **North Staffordshire hospital**, has deleted war hero Wilfred Alcock from his cataract removal waiting list because of "the bad feeling" caused by his public complaints about having to wait 43 weeks for an appointment. Mr Alcock had a cataract successfully removed from his left eye by Mr Brown four years ago, and so was given a lower priority than the many other patients with two cataracts blocking their vision. He has now been diverted to **Manchester Eye Infirmary** in search of a quicker service.

● **LIVERPOOL health authority** is going ahead with plans to stop emergency ambulance admissions to **Broadgreen hospital's casualty unit**, despite DoH assurances that this would not happen until alternative arrangements were up and running at **Whiston hospital**. They aren't.

"Calculator!"

● **BIRMINGHAM's** fated **Solihull hospital** closed the children's ward temporarily from 7 July because of a shortage of junior doctors. The hospital shares a combined rota with **Heartlands trust** for 15 doctors, but thus far has only attracted seven for the 1 August intake. They're going to have their work cut out.

● **NORTH Hertfordshire NHS trust** has failed to win approval from the **Royal College of Pathologists** for consultants working in its privatised laboratories at **Lister hospital** (*Eyes passim*). The trust is now most unlikely to be able to recruit new consultants.

● IN THE first three months of 1995, 14,500 NHS patients had their operations cancelled at the last minute, a rise of 22 percent on the previous quarter. Elsewhere savings made by GP fundholders on their budgets have now reached £100 million. The lucky docs are allowed to stash it away for up to four years before deciding what to do with it.

M.D.

DOWN ON THE FARM

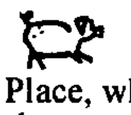
WITH his letter of appointment to the treasury stuffed in his back pocket, the last thing "Droopy" Willie Waldegrave must have wanted to talk about last Wednesday was nerve-gas based organophosphorus sheep dips — especially in so public a place as the agriculture select committee.

Still less would he have wanted to face the wrath of the fragrant Jean Corston MP, his erstwhile neighbour from Bristol East, in her full barrister mode. She has proved the rising star of Jerry Wiggins' committee in her tenacious attacks on the abysmal handling of the sheep dip saga.

Corston's central theme was that the Maffia department which licensed dangerous pesticides such as OP sheep dips — the veterinary medicines directorate — was responsible for both approving safety and for monitoring the harm to users in circumstances where it might be reluctant to find problems with products it had approved. Was it not unsound to have the same organisation acting as judge and jury in its own case?

Flanked by his good and faithful servants, Droopy — displaying the urbane politeness for which he will be missed — discharged his final duty as agriculture minister by taking Corston full on. And perhaps mindful that he was not going to have to pick up the tab, he actually offered her an olive branch. While not going so far as to admit that the system was corrupt, he did "understand" that the system might not "look right" to outside observers, and conceded that changes should be made.

Whether Droopy's replacement, Douglas "Piggy" Hogg, another agriculture minister with learner plates, can change a system that has allowed the health of thousands of farmers to be ruined, will be one of the first tests of his new ministry.



WHITEHALL Place, where "Piggy" will find his new Maffia headquarters, was the scene of much celebrating last week. The cause was the successful prosecution by ministry officials of a Staffordshire farmer for selling "black" milk.

While brown eggs come from brown hens and black wool from black sheep, "black" milk is not the produce of black cows. It is milk sold outside the insane EU quota system, which prohibits British dairy farmers from producing more than 85 percent of the national requirement.

Given willing buyers and sellers, it is not surprising that a black market in milk should emerge and, given the enthusiasm of the Maffia for a quota system which makes jobs for hundreds of civil servants, it is equally unsurprising that the jobsworths should have rushed in to protect the status quo.

What is offensive is the crowing tone of the Maffia which, no sooner having secured a conviction which will drive the unfortunate farmer into penury, rushed out a press release. "The result of this case," says the Maffia, "sends out a clear signal to milk producers that it simply does not pay to engage in black market trading of milk."

Compare and contrast this triumphalism with the Maffia's low-key approach to its disaster last month in the Oxford crown court when it wrongly prosecuted deer owner Anthony Barclay for cruelty to deer which never happened (*Eye* 873). Having cost the taxpayer more than £100,000 for a case the judge ruled should not have been taken, all the Maffia could do was "consider the implications". A press release is still awaited.

THE open season on livestock farmers, typified by the Barclay case, extended recently to North Yorkshire where the trading standards department is revelling in its successful prosecution of a young, previously blameless Wiltshire farmer who sent a consignment of sheep to a Moslem abattoir near Thirsk.

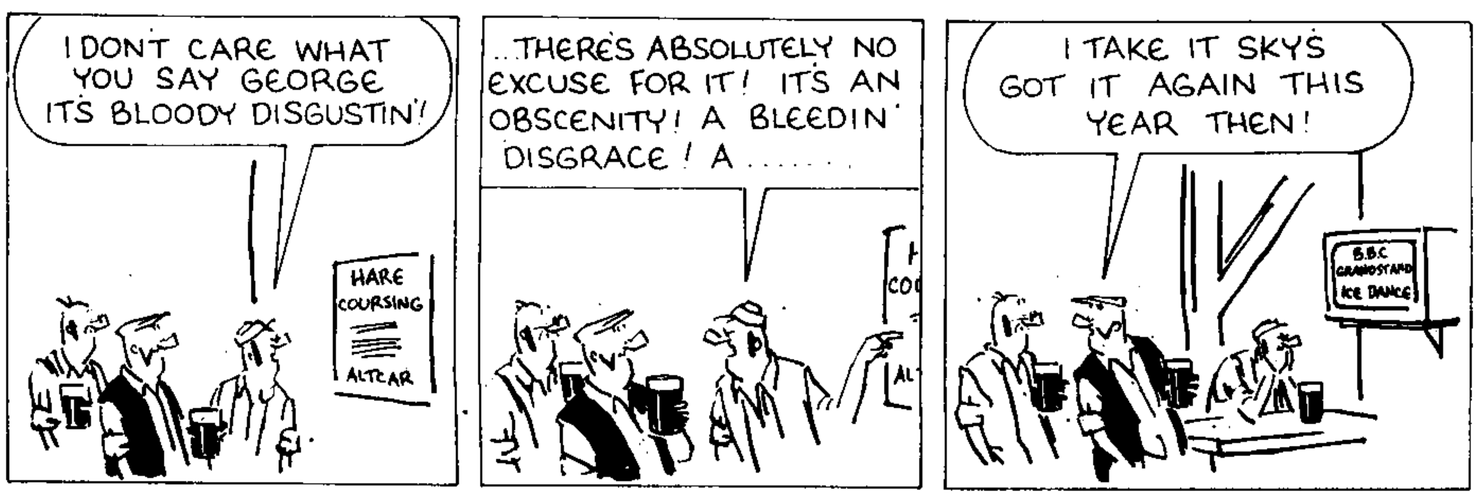
Although the truck was despatched to timings advised by the abattoir owners, by the time it arrived the owners refused to offload the sheep. They were forced to spend the night in the cramped truck. By morning, some of the sheep had been trampled and were lame, sparking off the prosecution of the unfortunate farmer, who had long since seen the last of his sheep.

Although it was admitted in court by the slaughterers, who intended the sheep for ritual killing without stunning, that it was "usual" for sheep to be left overnight in trucks, it seems North Yorkshire's finest are happy to concentrate their resources on unwary farmers unwise enough to send their animals to the area.

'New Muckspreader'

Old Macdonald

ALBERT


I DON'T CARE WHAT YOU SAY GEORGE ITS BLOODY DISGUSTIN'!
HARE COURSING
ALTCAR
..THERES ABSOLUTELY NO EXCUSE FOR IT! ITS AN OBSCENITY! A BLEEDIN' DISGRACE! A .....
I TAKE IT SKYS GOT IT AGAIN THIS YEAR THEN!
B.B.C. GRANDSTAND ICE DANCE

THE Rotten Borough Advertiser

A PICKLE IN PECKHAM

SO FAREWELL, then, Sonya Murison, who has resigned as a Labour councillor in Peckham, south London, citing "poor health". The truth is far more interesting.

Southwark council leader Jeremy Fraser called Murison to his office recently to show her the draft report of an internal audit investigation into the local advice centre where she was employed as a financial adviser. It showed that thousands of pounds had been paid out by the centre to companies that appear not to exist, and, embarrassingly for all concerned, nearly all the missing money had come from the annual £100,000 grant the centre received from Southwark, the council Murison represented.

Fraser also asked Murison why she had given herself a £15,000 redundancy cheque only weeks before Southwark decided to withdraw its grant to the centre, which forced its closure. Did she know the centre's funding was about to be withdrawn when she made out the cheque? How did she arrive at the figure of £15,000 when her annual salary was only £12,000? And how was she allowed to make out and sign for a cheque made payable to herself? The wizard financial adviser has still not answered these questions satisfactorily.

Generously Fraser offered Murison the chance to resign rather than have her case heard by the Labour party's national executive committee (NEC), which has the power to bar councillors from holding office. Previously Murison had her wrist slapped by Labour disciplinarian Joyce Gould for saying that what Peckham needed was a riot. Now her own future could be a riot: the district auditor is considering whether she should be made to pay back any of the missing money, and Inspector Knacker has been told about the case.

COLWYN BAY WATCH

■ COLWYN BAY borough council has found a sly way round the problems of its polluted seaside. Last year the Tidy Britain Group listed the bay as one of the dirtiest resorts in the country thanks to its poor water quality.

Then, the councillors indignantly pointed out that the group had used figures which were a year old. Today they are almost certain their water is up to scratch. But just in case it isn't, they recently passed a motion *not* to enter the bay for the blue flags award for water quality.

The decision was based on the infallible logic that if they are not going to pass the standard it is best not to enter for it in the first place. So locals stay well clear of the water — which remains contaminated with viruses — and holiday-makers are none the wiser.

SHEPWAY CATCHES SHINGLES

AS THE absurd PR guff for Lib-Dem Shepway council's £41 million coastal protection scheme says: "Coastal erosion can be defined at the loss of land and the encroachment of the sea. It is a complex process with many components such as waves, tides, geology and weather patterns."

Shepway clearly knows its stuff, which presumably is why at a cost of £13 million it has commissioned a programme of "beach nourishment" and "beach recharge". This consists of parking a dredger offshore and pumping shingle on to the beach at Sandgate, from where it is to be taken by lorry to the other beaches of Folkestone and Hythe. To cause maximum disruption, the work is being carried out in July, August and September, the height of the holiday season.

The contractor is HAM Dredging Ltd, part of the Dutch HBG Group, which, via its UK subsidiaries Hynes and Edmund Nuttall, has been disrupting life in Shepway for two years now with various road and sea defence construction works.

HBG knows all about moving shingle round the beaches of Shepway. The last time council taxpayers' money was wasted in this way was in 1987 when the then Tory council hired Mears Contractors, an HBG subsidiary, to drive lorryloads of shingle from Dungeness to the beaches of Folkestone, Sandgate and Hythe — again at the height of the summer season.

Within days of the work being completed, however, there was a week of stormy weather which destroyed all the Mears/HBG hard work and swept the shingle back out to sea.

STIGMA OF THE DUMPS

LIBERAL-controlled Richmond council in south-west London is doing its bit for pollution control and the quality of the environment in desirable Twickenham.

Over the last ten years the council has closed all but two of its depots, so instead of spreading the noise, fumes and nuisance the depots create across the borough, they are now concentrated at Craneford Way, Twickenham.

Bleary-eyed residents in hitherto quiet residential streets are protesting about lorries dumping rubbish for recycling all day and all night, the problem exacerbated by the lorries having to negotiate council speed bumps.

Residents are not having much luck with their protests, either: a petition to the council to help build a road connecting a nearby dual-carriageway directly with the depot was conveniently "lost" by the town hall, and when residents demonstrated against the lorries the drivers turned violent. Council officers wearing sunglasses and heavy disguises looked on.

Why is Richmond concentrating its dumps on Craneford Way? The council seems determined to transfer as much publicly-owned land as it can to private developers, often at knock-down prices. Over the last 10 years the leasehold of 211 acres has gone for just £475,000 — and council depots make attractive industrial sites.

IN BRIEF

LEWISHAM: The council is speeding up its allocation of housing. June Gonsalves was offered a home in the more des. south of the borough within 24 hours of registering — astonishing given the 10,000-plus waiting list and that under a year ago she had sold a house which would normally make her ineligible. No doubt her brother Claude will also be surprised: he is Lewisham's chairman of housing.

ENFIELD: Tory councillor Pamela Adams has been fined £300 for breaking an order to stop late-night shouting sessions with herself. The prosecution was brought by her own council's noise abatement officers and followed years of complaints from neighbours.

CAMDEN: The Labour borough has paid £50,000 for a hi-tech kiosk in the town hall foyer (purpose: none) and a quarter of a million for new shelves, desks, chairs and "general refurbishment" in the finance department (cost: £6,000 per officer). Meanwhile the hours and £18,000 salaries of three lifeguards at Swiss Cottage pool have been cut (to £7,000), forcing them to find new jobs.

HACKNEY: After the jobs for illegal immigrants scam the council is searching all 11,000 staff files for bogus references or invalid naturalisation papers. In one month five files have been checked, so the job will only take another 166 years. Meanwhile acting chief exec Mike Craig departs with a pension and £80,000 lump sum — a package drawn up by finance director Mike Craig.

BROMLEY: The Tory council is now spying on fatcat home helps who earn £4 an hour to check they're not cheating. Three women were recently followed and huge fraud was discovered: one claimed to have driven five miles to see a client when she had only gone four; another claimed to have spent an hour with a client but the SS (social services) timed her at only 47 minutes.

RED FACE OF THE WEEK

■ LEEDS city council's social services department is advertising for a "children's rights officer" who, for a salary of up to £20,000 a year, will "enhance the position of children in the spirit of the UN convention on the rights of the child". The vacancy arises because Leeds's last children's rights officer left facing a charge of assaulting a child.

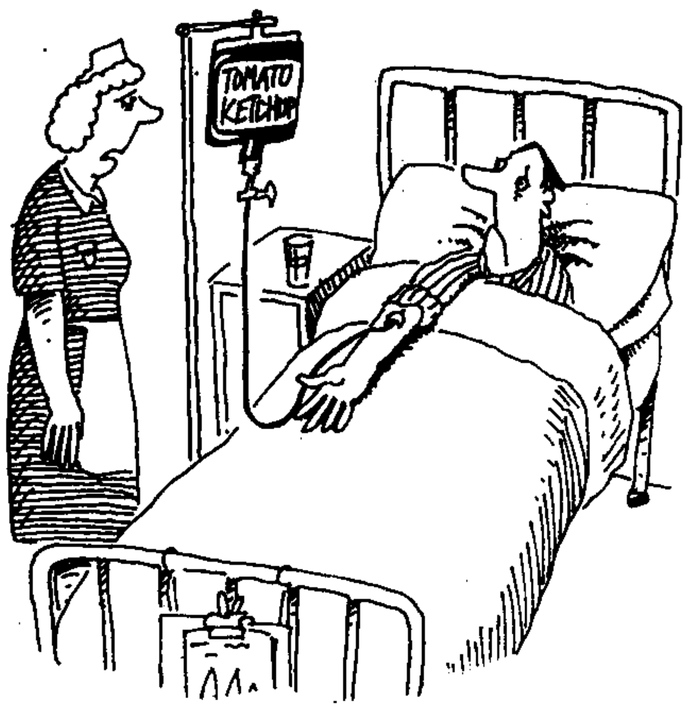
ENERGY NEWS

THE directors of ICI have at last taken the *Eye*'s advice.

Two and a half years ago, when the company was belly-aching about the cost of electricity, we asked: "Why doesn't it build itself a power plant at Runcorn?"

We also put the question to its official spokesman. He replied that it was a chemical company and was concentrating on core business. Lo and behold, last week ICI decided to spend £250 million on a gas-fired station on its own site at Runcorn.

Explaining the decision ICI said it was spending £50 million a year for electricity for the Runcorn plant compared with £30 million before privatisation, a loss of £20 million a year. At this rate it has lost £50 million over the past two and a half years and would have saved that money if its slow-witted directors had taken our advice more quickly. (*That's enough gloating — Ed.*)



"I'm afraid we're a bit short of blood this week"

BLOOD MONEY

AFTER last week's cock-up the last thing chiefs of the national blood authority (NBA) wanted was scrutiny of the quango's forthcoming reorganisation. The plans could have lethal consequences.

Department of health officials like to point out that the UK has enough spare capacity in its 15 transfusion centres to supply the entire European Union. But instead of trying to increase supply to insure against regular blood shortages or unforeseen accidents, the NBA has decided to close five of the centres.

The blood stock will be moved round the country between new "zonal" centres, and to meet this objective a £4.5 million computer system is being introduced to replace the regional centres' systems. The new system is now 12 months late, and further delays have been caused by the treasury requesting that the private finance initiative (*Eyes passim*) be applied to the project. But the NBA wants to implement the reorganisation as quickly as possible — without waiting for the new technology.

Blood products are currently identified using a six-figure code which provides one million unique numbers. But nationally there are more than three million blood items and until a *national* unique identification system exists for blood products, the danger remains of different blood products — from different blood groups — carrying the same number. Since the number of transfers will increase tenfold, the likelihood of blood products with the same ID code from donors of different blood groups increases.

The NBA claims to be saving £10 million in the reorganisation. But on closer examination the savings vanish. An internal report, which included the cost of transport and the deterioration that occurs when blood stock is moved, put the "saving" at a gigantic £380,000. The DoH already admits that nearly £1.5 million has been spent on consultants to achieve this saving.

LEGAL NEWS

DAVID COCKS, the QC who was recently described as a "pathological liar" by Brian Sedgemore MP, has recently served an enforcement order for legal costs on Felicity Hammerton, his former pupil and the long-suffering mother of his love-child.

This arose out of an action brought by Cocks against her, then subsequently withdrawn by him, in which costs were awarded against her.

In a previous action a judge stated that Cocks had used the threat of costs as a weapon of intimidation against Ms Hammerton, while barristers who had agreed to represent Ms Hammerton for nothing in the event that she might lose (Nicholas Wilson QC, now a high court judge, and Joanna Dobson QC) refused on principle to accept money from Cocks when costs were awarded against him.

Ms Hammerton, who has not worked as a barrister for more than a year owing to illness and who has just applied for £42-a-week invalidity benefit, will not be able to meet the £4,000 bill without selling her two-bedroomed flat in north London.

Cocks ensured that this bombshell arrived at precisely the right time — when his son by Ms Hammerton was sitting A levels.

Letters

Shell suitor

Sir,

My geriatric boss Tony Rice and I were over the moon when your upstanding organ probed the financial backwaters of our corporate mass. (A citation in Eye is worth any number in learned tomes.) In gratitude, we would like to out ourselves through your hallowed pages.

A rational approach to deep sea science looked secure until a couple of weeks ago. In fact, the people who pay our wages, British and other European tax-payers, seemed to be taking more interest in it than usual.

Then Shell wrecked it. In a flash of divine enlightenment they converted to the pristine oceans dogma of Greenpeace. As with all infallible religions, resistance is useless — our work here is through if we can't look behind the Godhead. As Shell's cult grows, we blasphemers will be cast into the abyss — no I mean the North Sea, sorry, sorry, I mean cremated, no just joking, obviously buried underground but put in a lead casket anyway, er not lead exactly, more a sort of glass, recycled glass that is. Anyway we are all off to study the oceanography of the planet Vulcan before the lights go out and the fatwas start here.

By the way, our institute accountants can't find that Shell money. Wherever it went in NERC, it didn't come here, honest.

Live long and prosper,
BRIAN BETT,
IOSDL, Wormley, Surrey.

Lookalike

Zappa

Redwood

Sir,

Can the resemblance between sadly deceased musician and scourge of Republicans Frank Zappa and sadly still with us politician and hero of Republicans John Redwood be merely coincidence? Or does the similarity of their views on Europe point to a closer kinship (viz. Zappa's song "In France" etc).

Yours,
ANDREW SHILCOCK,
London NW8.

Rat poison

Sir,

I write as a long-standing supporter of PRIVATE EYE, *and also an admirer of your wit and apparent fair-mindedness when I have seen you on television, to express to you my concern and upset at the description of me contained in your issue of today's date (*EYE *875).*

I really cannot think or imagine what could have caused you to allow such a description to be printed, referring to me as "a rodent" and I wonder whether you would be willing to explain how this came to be printed and who the "other scouse lawyers" are.

I can accept that the incident in question was one which merits some satirical comment, such as the one contained in the article, and I am also more than confident of the outcome so far as it is concerned, in due course. However, I hope you will appreciate my concern, upset and dismay at such a gratuitously offensive remark, and my disappointment that you should publish it without, I am sure, any proper inquiry or investigation.

I hope that you will contact me urgently to discuss how this can be remedied.

Yours sincerely,
R.M. BROUDIE,
Liverpool.

Quatermass and the Armpit

Sir,

I am currently researching a book on disaster movies — that is movies that were disastrous rather than those that specifically depicted disasters. One such is the seminal work QUATERMASS AND THE EVIL WEE BEASTIE *which, my research indicates, featured in the title role an obscure Scottish journalist who has since moved into television. Alas, this film was so appallingly dire that it never saw release and only one scene of it now remains, in which Quatermass and his young Asian assistant whilst searching for clues in the desert night are first confronted with the terrible "Wee Beastie". I believe you recently published a still from this scene, and would be grateful if you would do so again — the unconvincing grimaces of terror on the faces of the actors is an invaluable testament to the quality of the film.*

PADDY SPENCER,
Helsinki, Finland.

Scent down

Sir,

It occurs to me that Mr Grant's problem has arisen because of Ms Hurley's recent association with a perfumier.

It is well known that an excessively fragrant partner traditionally leads to consorting with prostitutes and lewd acts.

Yours faithfully,
TONY WRIGHT,
Henley-in-Arden, Warks.

Vigour mortis

Sir,

*I refer to my inclusion (twice) in your so-called "Pseuds Corner" in the last issue (*EYE *875).*

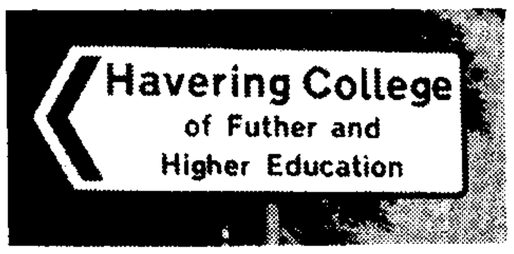
Those words were indeed mine and were taken from a Radio One publicity release.

I was articulating in clear terms the very zeitgeist of the resurgent network. We are talking about a **risorgimento**. *Just as the Italian intelligentsia in the mid-nineteenth century engendered and rode on the crest of a cultural and political new wave after the aridity of the Ancien Regime, so have several Radio One DJs after a difficult period, created a unique artistic vigour which is so perfectly fin de siecle.*

This, might I remind you, is a vigour that few would have thought possible only a short while ago. If Matthew Bannister is not our Garibaldi he is most certainly our Count Camillo Cavour. Your snobbery does not become you.

Yours sincerely,
NICKY CAMPBELL,
DJ, Radio One.

I-SPY



Essex

Lothian Health Trust

Submitted by R.M. Clark and Dr A.G. Gray. £10 paid for similar submissions. *(SAE required for return of photographs. No transparencies.)*

Untrustworthy

Sir,

*In his letter criticising the Skye Bridge (*EYE *875) Jerry Cox has made the fundamental error of confusing the National Trust, which covers England, Wales and Northern Ireland, with the National Trust for Scotland, which is totally independent from Octavia Hill's rather superior creation and in no way the NT's Scottish branch.*

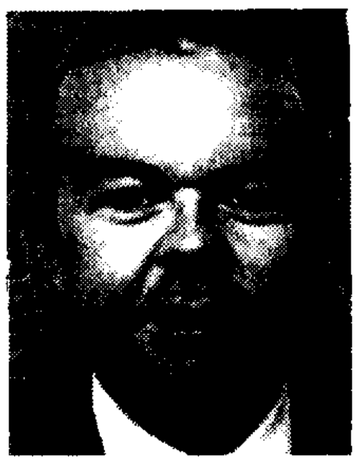
As one of many former disillusioned NTS press officers (1981/2), I should hate to see the National Trust being tarred with the same brush, and I would support wholeheartedly any suggestion that members of NTS should consider investing in a more worthwhile conservation organisation working for Scottish interests — preferably the John Muir Trust.

Yours cynically,
WILLIE MORRISON,

Inverness.

Lookalike

Editor



Hung Kaiquan

Sir,

Pardon me for Beijing the question, but could there be a family connection between your very own Ian Hislop, and the world's shortest 25-year-old, Huang Kaiquan of China?

I think we should be told.

Yours faithfully,
SIMON HUMPHREYS,

Claremont, South Africa.

Just what the Dr orders

Sir,

I could not help but be one of the many who are bound to reply to Dr Alexander's letter (875).

I commend Dr Alexander for his low rate of prescribing, and I also agree that the financial inducements are wrongly applied, the lowest prescribers around should be bonused, encouraging Drs to issue fewer and less expensive scripts.

I agree with him fully that it is important for Drs to reduce their spending on pharmaceuticals wherever possible. He does however seek to brand Drs who are educated overseas, as the Drs with the highest level of prescribing — it is easy then, all we have to do is ban the entry of any Drs trained abroad and our drug bills will be cut. If only it were so simple.

He also implies that Drs with high prescribing (whether or not they work in areas of poverty or areas with an elderly population where there tends to be a higher spend) are either completely stupid, very gullible or both. The GPs, having gained the necessary qualifications to practise, would imply a reasonable level of intelligence. This, I would suggest, is sufficient to ask themselves or the computer, is there a cheaper drug? This is irrespective of whether a "Drug Rep" has called or not.

Yours faithfully,
ALEXANDER D. HARKNESS,

London SE8.

Please address letters for publication to Private Eye, 6 Carlisle Street, London W1V 5RG or e-mail to strobes@cix.compulink.co.uk (marked "For Publication"). And the Eye's WWW page is now available: http://www.intervid.co.uk/intervid/eye/gateway.html

Colemanballs

£10 paid for contributions

"And that was Take That singing acoustically, with their own voices."
MARK GOODIER, Radio 1
(James Adamson)

"The clock is going to tick one way or the other."
JIM NAUGHTIE, Radio 4
(Mike Whitaker)

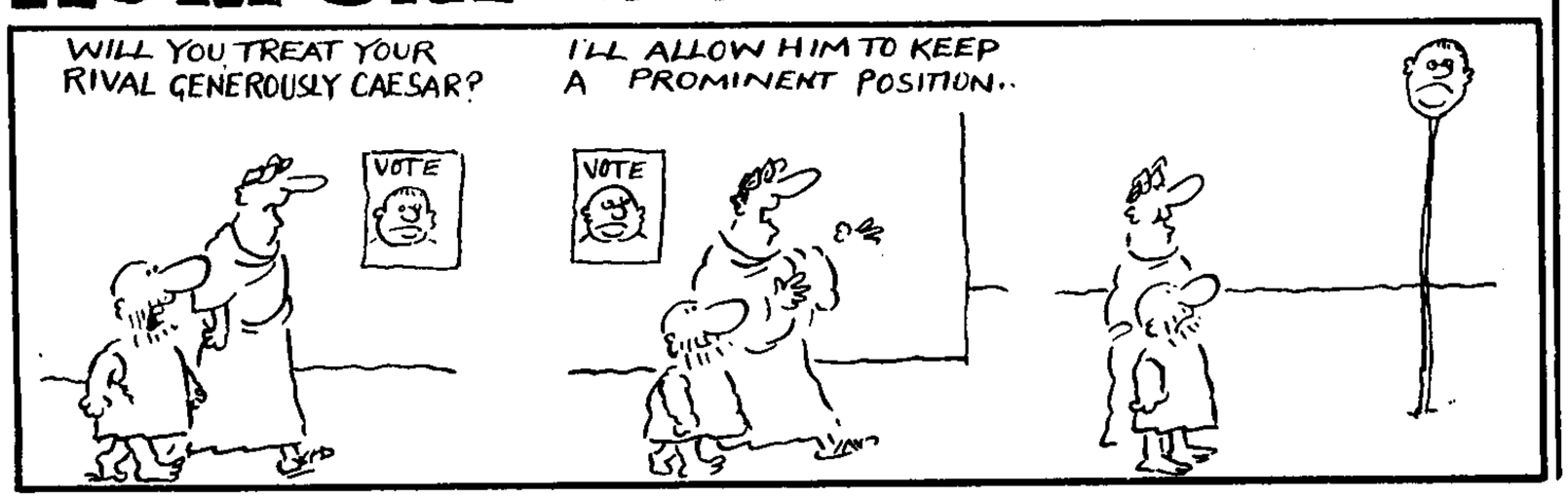
"Jersey's Crime Prevention Team are out and about, so have you locked up your property?"
ROGER BARA, Radio Jersey
(Don Filleul)

"Here we have a government disintegrating between our eyes..."
JOHN PRESCOTT MP, BBC
(Philip Sims)

Justine Webb: *With John Redwood declaring, what do you do now? Do you stand back and say "Let the best man win?"*
Jeremy Hanley: *No I don't. I'm right behind the Prime Minister.*
BBC Breakfast News
(Roger J. Harris)

HOM SAP

BY DAVID AUSTIN



Letter from **Pakistan**

from Our Own Correspondent

EVEN from beyond the grave Iqbal Masih is continuing to embarrass and irritate the government of Pakistan.

The 12-year-old boy, who after release from child carpet slavery in 1993 campaigned relentlessly for the freedom of other children, was murdered on 16 April. Initially claims were made and reported in the western press that Iqbal's death had nothing to do with his campaign against the carpet industry but was because he and another boy disturbed a labourer committing bestial acts with a donkey in a field. The labourer is then said to have shot the two boys, killing Iqbal Masih.

This view has been strongly denied by Ehsan Ullah Khan, the president of the Bonded Labour Liberation Front (BLLF), for whom Iqbal Masih worked. Further support comes with a study of the post mortem report by the director of the international forensic programme of US-based Physicians for Human Rights, which stated that "further investigation is clearly necessary to resolve the discrepancies between the pattern of injuries and the alleged circumstances of the attack".

There has been much recent intimidation of those who question the operation of the carpet industry in Pakistan. Zafar Yab Ahmed, a journalist with *The News* in Lahore who had been investigating bonded labour in Pakistan, has been arrested. Ahmed and Ehsan Ullah Khan — who is presently in Europe — have both been charged with sedition and collusion with the Indian Intelligence Agency, RAW. RAW is said to have "set up a plan to exploit the murder of Iqbal Masih with a view to causing a recurring financial loss to the Pakistan business interest abroad..." (This view ignores the almost simultaneous arrest in India of Kailash Satyarthi, head of the South Asian Coalition on Child Servitude, who does similar work against carpet slavery in that country).

BLLF offices have been raided across Pakistan and four members have been arrested. Since April, members of Iqbal Masih's family have been constantly harassed and 13 — including his mother and sister — have now been arrested.

In another macabre twist, Saif Masih, the estranged father of Iqbal, appeared at a press conference — held at the Lahore press club — denouncing Ehsan Ullah Khan for exploiting Iqbal's murder to harm the country's economic interests abroad. Saif has been separated from Iqbal's mother for the past 12 years and denied that he had only reappeared following the award of 200,000 rupees to the Masih family by the Pakistan government. Saif also failed to explain how he, a poor illiterate construction labourer, had been able to arrange such a press event.

Ehsan Ullah Khan remains in Europe and recently visited Britain, where he accused people who buy carpets made with child labour of "having blood on their hands". Interestingly enough, the BLLF has revealed that among the recipients of rugs — likely to have involved child labour in production — are Britain's three party leaders.

On a visit to Britain in November 1994 Benazir Bhutto presented rugs to all three leaders. When questioned about the possible involvement of child labour, Paddy Ashdown's office wrote to the Pakistan high commission inquiring as to the origins of the rug. John Major's office stated that any gift over £130 is the property of the state unless purchased by the PM himself. Clearly this is a total abrogation of responsibility by the British prime minister, but would seem consistent with his stand on labour rights generally. Tony Blair's office failed to respond at all — no doubt unwilling to rule out child labour as a possible future policy option for a Labour government.

The benign response of Major and Blair has done little here to inspire optimism for future measures against child slavery from British governments.

CORRECTION - last week's Ad. which read 'What is Parrot-psychology?' should have read 'What is Para-psychology?' We apologise for any confusion.

Hull Daily Mail

FUNNY OLD WORLD

"The first thing people usually notice about Feral Cheryl is that she's got pierced nipples," Leigh Duncan told a surprised audience of sales reps at a toy convention in New South Wales. "Everyone has the urge to look up a dolly's dress, and when they do they see that she's got pubic hair. They tend to get a bit of a shock.

"Feral Cheryl is the Barbie doll for alternative lifestylers. She has dreadlocks, unshaven legs, tattoos on her thighs, pierced nipples, pubic hair, vagina and clitoris, and no knickers." Ms Duncan had chosen the convention to launch her doll, named after Ferals, the extreme fringe of Australia's environmental movement who live a hunting-and-gathering existence on the east coast. "There have been written complaints, and I received some death threats because of Feral's range of accessories, including recycled tampons which can be inserted or removed, and an imitation bag of marijuana. Ferals don't relate to the clean Barbie image. Cheryl is a slut and that's that. As far as threats go, I don't give a toss. Order now, because stocks are limited." *(New Zealand Sunday Star/Times, 21/5/95. Spotter — Chris Brown)*

—o—

"The toilet reflects the history and temperament of a people," moderator Pao Ping-Wing reminded delegates at the International Symposium on Public Lavatories in Hong Kong. "The Chinese are traditionally very conservative, so their toilets are private. In Japan the toilets are very open, and the Japanese language has more than 650 expressions to describe the task of visiting the toilet. In Bangkok, commuters even carry portable toilets in their car, with a car battery connector enabling them to flush. But, if the culture of the toilet differs, the universal need does not."

Later, Urban Council chairman Dr Ronald Leung Ding-Bong addressed the most serious problem facing delegates: "There is a need for more female toilets or we are sure to have a disaster. Take a look anywhere and you will see that the queue for the ladies is too long. It would be much easier if only men used toilets, but we are now studying what takes women so long. We have found that 60% of women hover above the toilet, and 20% nest by placing paper on the seat. The rest, in my opinion, are out to kill themselves. Public toilets are a dangerous place for those who sit or squat. This is no joke, and I'm giving you a warning, ladies, you could end up in the casualty department. People still climb up on the pedestal toilets, so I am a big advocate of the squatters. Not so far to fall." *(South China Morning Post, 26/5/95. Spotter — Gillian Stevens)*

—o—

"So far, we've ordered fifty pink uniforms for the habitual gunslingers," Charlie Bodiford told reporters gathered in Holman Prison, Alabama. "Locking them up hasn't worked, because they just go right back down the hall and do it again, so now we're gonna try shaming them into behaving."

Bodiford was speaking about the latest attempts by the Alabama Corrections Department to solve the problem of "gunslingers", sexually aggressive male inmates who expose themselves and masturbate in front of female prison guards. "Several of the women guards have quit their jobs over this, and we've tried everything we can think of to stop it. One time, we even bought some disposable cameras, took pictures of the gunslingers in action, and threatened to send them to their mothers, but they didn't care and carried on doing it. But, maybe, once we get them on the chain gang in pink pants and shirts, the heckling from the other inmates will stop their filthy business."

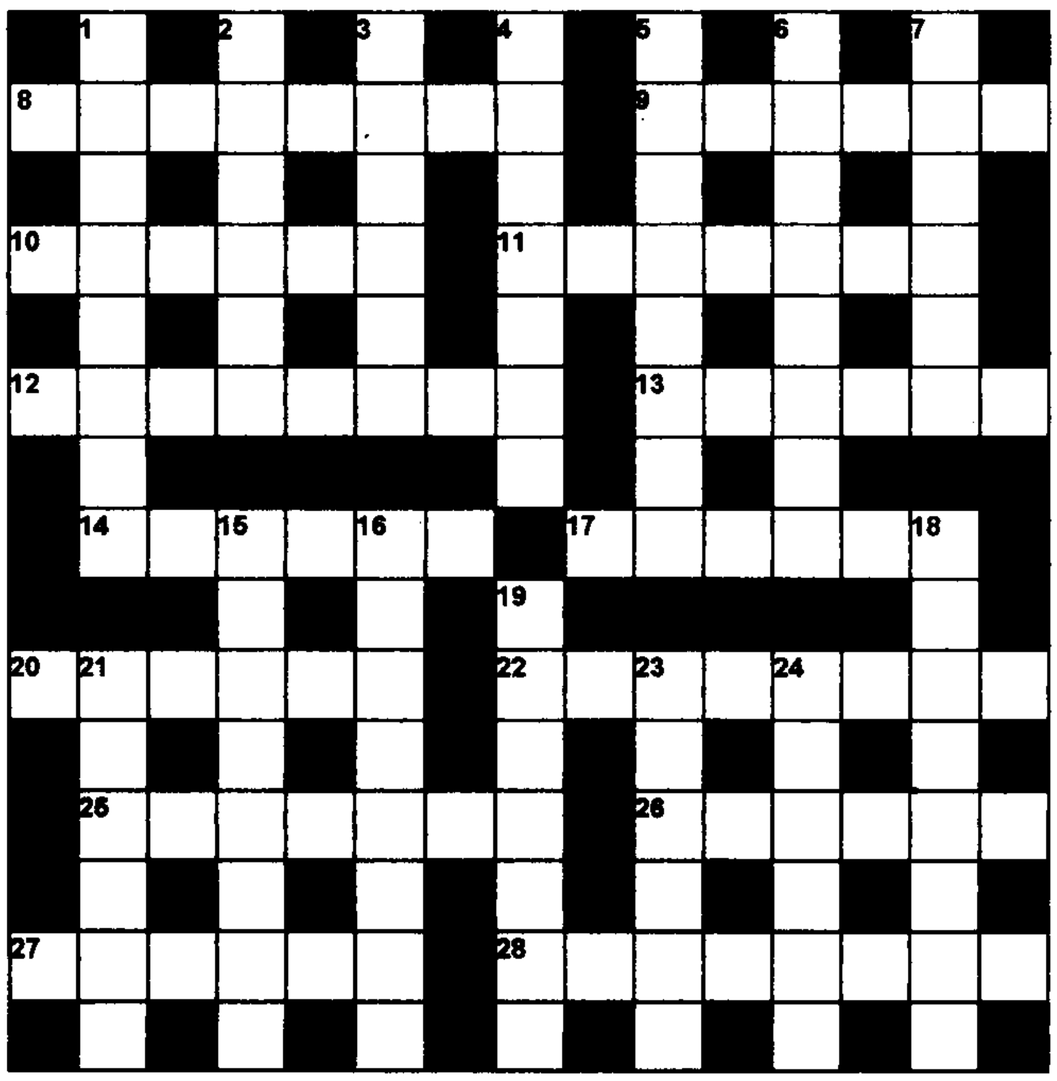
However, a prison psychologist doubted whether the scheme would be effective. "If their goal is to upset officers, then issuing them with pink uniforms will simply encourage them," he said. (Eastern Express [Hong Kong], 22/5/95. Spotter — A.W.C. Clark)

Compiled by

Victor Lewis-Smith

EYE CROSSWORD 32 by Cyclops

£100 Winner LINDA RATCLIFFE



ACROSS

8/28 Major back-stabber emerges from drunken bash on a stretcher (8,8)
9 Obnoxious party-backed records of borrowing (6)
10 Trendy 'Hello' from 1960s reluctant shagger (3-3)
11 A challenging bastard of very high standing in California (7)
12 Sort of communication that would inform Major he's been dumped? (4,4)
13 Means the law is corrupt (6)
14 Screw you've really had to work for? (6)
17 One took out 'one's offspring'? (6)
20 There's little good in remoulding image of this woman! (6)
22 So presumably the stink has died down from the so-called sporting body? (3,5)
25 Stuffing then gagging Di's complaint (7)
26 Conservative leader sheer crap on tv (6)
27 Doing what BMARC did to Iran, cultivating? F-off! (6)
28 (see 8)

DOWN

1 The sort of society we're becoming? Broke! (8)
2 It's Cantona's thing, being one who hits out, we hear (6)
3 Superstar hideaway — taxmen get sod all (2,4)
4 Fanny wouldn't quite be seen wearing one (1-6)
5 One world-rocking negotiator? Hardly (4,4)
6 An outmoded burden, Di should get on back to indiscriminate USA, right? (8)
7 In craft, Di's an expert (6)
15 English lass needs to get screwed outside — assistance requested by suitor (5,3)
16 Broadcast watchdog with right to eye up a lot of pussy (4-4)
18 Just the place for wet dreams? (5,3)
19 A percentage of Brenda's lot? (7)
21 Square on tv, that's Prince (formerly) (6)
23 Old party official's summer residence by university — a place of concentrated horror (6)
24 Community split by new gay-bashing outside bureau (6)

£100 prize to first correct solution opened on 21.07.95. Entries to "Crossword", Private Eye, 6 Carlisle Street, London W1V 5RG.

Solution to Crossword No. 31

ACROSS: 6 Robin Cook 8 Order 10 Victim 11 Radicals 12 Oddball 13 Screws 14/3 Stephen Dorrell 16 Bananas 19 Secede 21 Voskhod 23 Liberals 24 Tories 26 Whigs 27 Overdosed.

DOWN: 1 Mori 2 Fitted up 3 (See 14) 4 Grocer 5 Yellow card 7 CAMRA 9 Odessa 12 On the right 15 Eyesay 17 Atherton 18 Evasive 20 Energy 22 Satire 25 Eden.

SLEAZE LATEST

AITKEN DENIES SEX SMEAR

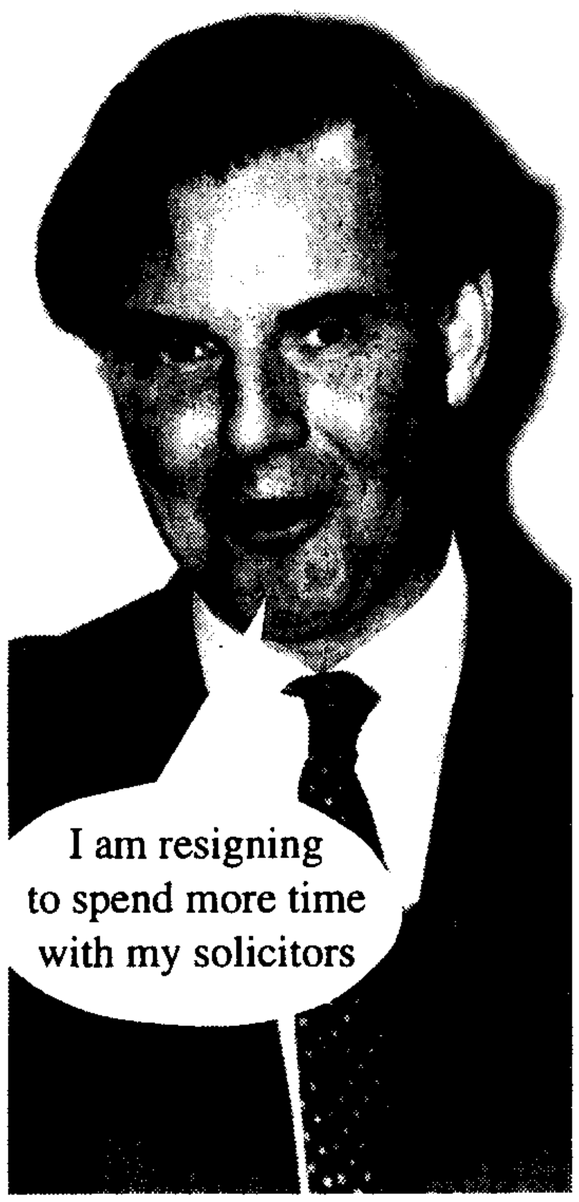
by Our Filth Correspondent
Janet Street-Walker

FORMER Treasury Minister Jonathan Aitken today denied all knowledge of an alleged 27-month affair with a high-class call girl.

"I may well have attended meetings with this woman," he said, "but at no time did she tell me what she was doing. I was completely in the dark until she turned the lights on".

Super Gun

Mr Aitken claimed that no formal record of the meetings were kept and that he himself had been out of the room when the alleged incidents occurred.



ON OTHER PAGES

BOTTOMLEY TAKES OVER AT HERITAGE

Stonehenge to close p.94

PHILIP LARKINTINO

ATTROCIOUS TACKI

(The World's 2nd Worst Columnist)

Ugly Creep

WHAT an ugly creep that Agassi is. When I played tennis for Greece I had to shave and put on a clean pair of shorts.

Beautiful Woman

WHAT does a beautiful girl like Brooke Shields see in that balding stubble-faced creep Agassi? He may be rich, but he is ugly.

Ugly Old Woman

I CAN'T stand that Barbra Streisand. She is a fat old bag and Jewish and ugly.

NEXT WEEK: My thoughts on Barbra Steisand.

A Chief Commissioner writes

In the absence of the cabdriver on holiday we have invited **Sir Paul Condon**, the Chief Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, to write on an issue of topical importance.

■ I mean, I'm no racist, right guv, but the facts speak for themselves which is that 98% of muggings in London are done by the darkies. Let's not beat about the bush. It can't carry on like this. D'you know what I'd do about these muggers and I'm serious? I'd go up to that Bernie Grant and the rest of the community leaders and I'd say "Why can't you do something to get it sorted?" I had that John Fashanu in the back of my station the other day...

SUPERMODELS

Neil Kerber

LIZ, I'M SO SORRY DARLING.
ESTÉE LAUDER
sniff
IT WAS A MISTAKE TO GO WITH SUCH A TALENTLESS PUBLICITY-SEEKING BIMBO.....
I SHOULD'VE STUCK WITH THE HOOKER!
sniff

And a further £100 million was saved through greater efficiency, of which £80 went towards new and enhanced programmes. *Ariel*

EFFLUENT businessman, mid 40's, seeks rough gem to turn into a diamond, call me.

Nottingham Herald & Post

"PRESENTING YOURSELF"
This book is about you and how you present yourself everyday at work and at play. If it worked for John Major, think what it could do for you!

Advertisement

The Secret DIARY OF JOHN MAJOR aged 47¾

Tuesday

Today is in my judgement the most historic day in the history of Britain. I have swept back to power with the biggest landslide victory that any prime minister has ever won. The historic moment came at precisely 5.22 p.m when Sir Marcus Fox rang up from the House of Commons and said: "Prime Minister, let me be the first to congratulate you. I am absolutely delighted to be able to tell you that the votes cast for each of the candidates were as follows:

"Sutch, Screaming Lord. Not standing.

"Redwood, Norman John Henry Vulcan. 89.

"Major (that is you, Prime Minister) John, 218.

"Papers spoiled by comments such as 'Bring back Thatch', 'They are both tossers' and 'Free Myra Hindley' 18."

"So who has won then?" I asked Sir Marcus. "It is my humble duty to inform you, Prime Minister, that you are now the leader of the Conservative party and it is a tribute to your unique powers of leadership that only a tiny pathetic minority of 109 MPs were against you."

As soon as Sir Marcus had brought me this astonishing news, which was exactly what I had predicted, I went out into Downing Street to speak to the world's press, just like Mrs Thatcher used to do when we has retaken the Falkland Islands. This was the clear message I gave them:

1. The air is now completely cleared.
2. The boil is lanced.
3. We have now drawn a firm line under everything.
4. Let us now get on with the real job of this government which is to stop Mr Blair winning the next election.
5. This is a time for reconciliation and party unity.

A reporter from the *Newsnight* programme shouted out: "Does that mean you will be giving Mr Redwood his job back?" "Certainly not, he is a bastard," I replied in my new, no-nonsense, I-am-totally-in-charge-because-I-have-won-the-biggest-election-victory-in-history voice. Oh yes, make no mistake. I am the master now.

Wednesday

All night the messages of congratulations have been pouring in for my astonishing victory. Every single member of the Cabinet has written me a personal note saying that it is a tremendous personal tribute to my courage and leadership that I have won this overwhelming triumph, with only a third of the MPs against me. I have also had messages of support from all sorts of other people including Tory MPs, Party Chairmen and Terry's wife Shirley, who I have not spoken to since Christmas 1989. This shows that the whole country has rallied behind me, and that the boil is well and truly lanced.

Thursday

No sooner had my wife Norman taken my breakfast poached egg out of the microwave this morning, than there was a knock at the door. It was Mr Heseltine, who I had quite forgotten about in my hour of triumph. He was holding a crumpled piece of paper which he put on the table in front of me. "I expect you remember this," he said, with a curious smile. It read:

"I, John Major, hereby agree that in consideration for the agreement of Michael Roy Dibdin Heseltine not to stand against me in the leadership election, I will give the aforesaid M. Heseltine the following:

"1. That he shall enjoy the rank, title and position of Lord High First Secretary and Deputy Prime Minister.

"2. That he shall be regarded as the most important person in the Cabinet.

"3. That he will be in charge of all Cabinet committees to decide the government's policy on all matters.

"4. That in return for not being prime minister, he will be allowed to run the country.

"Signed and witnessed by Tarzan, Lord of the Jungle, Grand Big Beast and All-Powerful One. His mark."

I said to Mr Heseltine that I had drawn a line under anything I might have written before my unprecedented personal victory, and that therefore his piece of paper was not worth the paper it was written on. We then had an interesting conversation for two hours, and I eventually showed how in charge I was by agreeing to everything he wanted.

Friday

Mr Heseltine is taking his new job very seriously. He has already drawn up a list of who is to be in my new bastard-free Cabinet. I agree with all his suggestions, which are very sensible and should give my government an entirely fresh look so that we can beat Mr Blair. For instance, Mr Clarke will be Chancellor, Mr Howard will be the Home Secretary, Mr Gummer will be at the Environment ministry and instead of Mr Hurd, there will be Mr Rifkind, who has exactly the right deep voice for explaining that it would not be helpful to have a policy on the Single Currency yet. I shall be in no small measure sad to lose some old faces, such as Mr Hanley who has made such a tremendous contribution to putting across our policies to the country in the past two years. Also I have never known anyone so brilliant at solving crosswords since Mr Colthard who was in the mortgage department of the Standard Bank, where I worked in 1968. But there are several very exciting new faces to give my Cabinet a totally fresh look, eg Mr Freeman, Mr Hogg, and Mr Squitt who is only 23, and who will help us to win over the younger voters in time for the next election.

Saturday

This is the end of the most historic week since I became prime minister. For the first time I am my own man, except for the 109 MPs who didn't vote for me. One thing is certain; I show no animosity in my hour of total victory. I have always made it clear that Mr Redwood had a perfect right to stand against me, but now he must pay the price. I was very pleased to see that he now has to walk to work and open his own letters. Not that he will get any, except rude ones telling him what a bastard he is.

Also, I have won a tremendous victory against the press. They all said that if I was re-elected it would be a complete disaster for Britain. But they have all been proved totally wrong. I have been re-elected and the boil is totally lanced. This should shut them up for once and for all. As I said, "Put up or shut up." I put up, and they should shut up. That has been the verdict of the country. Oh yes.

Sunday

All the papers are attacking me again, saying that I have done a deal with Mr Heseltine and that I am no longer in full control. Mr Heseltine was also in no small measure annoyed and he rang to tell me to issue a denial of all the stories .

Later a big removal van drew up outside my house in Downing Street. "Go away," I said. "I am still the Prime Minister. Oh yes. The men laughed and began to unload a very large desk, a big swivel chair, and some exercise equipment, weights etc.

"These are far too big for my office," I said in my special I-have-won voice. "No, not you, mate," said the man. "These are for Tarzan."

Poetry Corner

In Memoriam Eva Gabor

So. Farewell
Then Eva
Gabor.

Sister of
Zsa-Zsa

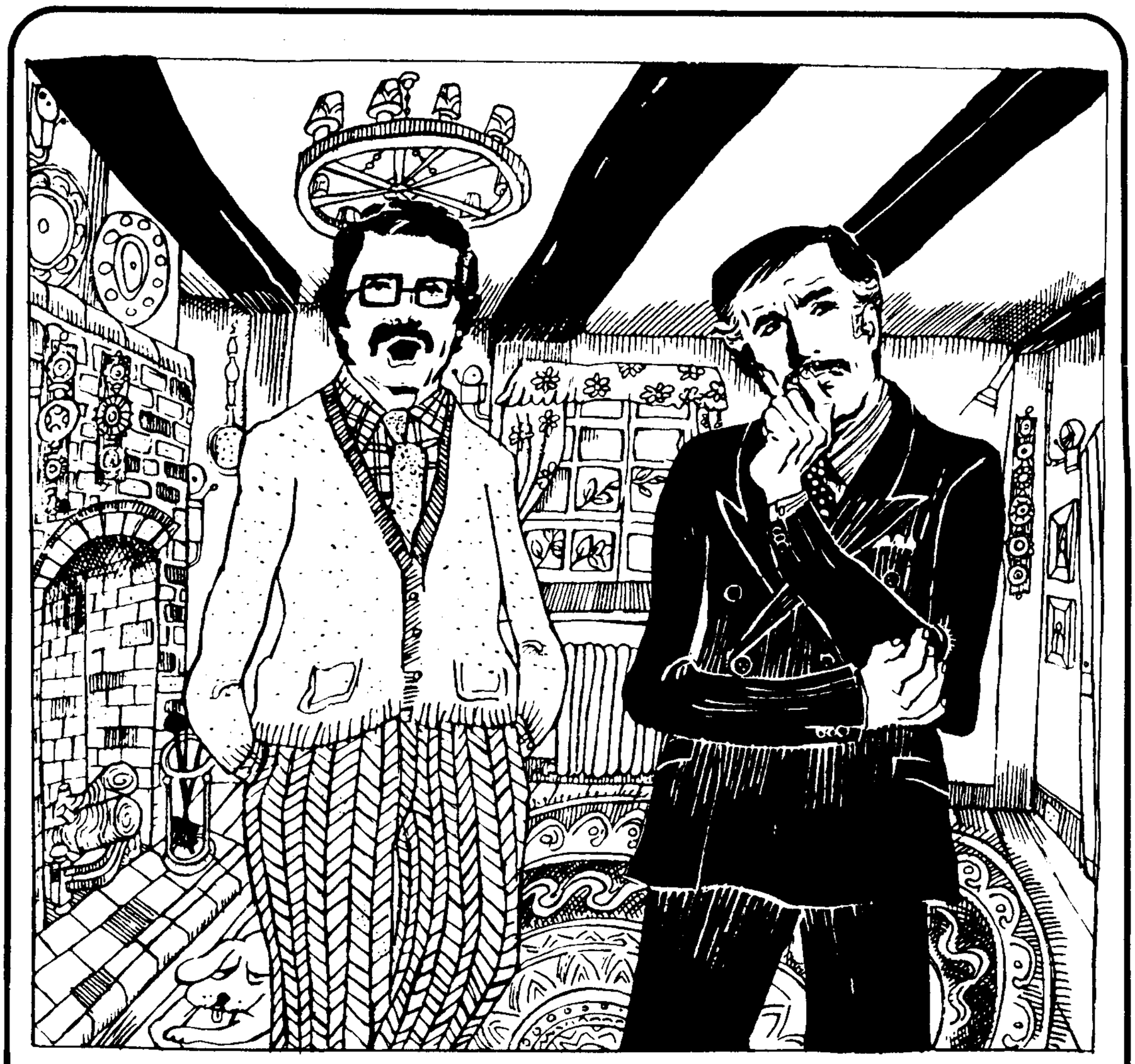
Who was
More famous.

Apparently
There was another sister.

But I cannot
Think of her
Name.

(Nor can
Keith's Mum.)

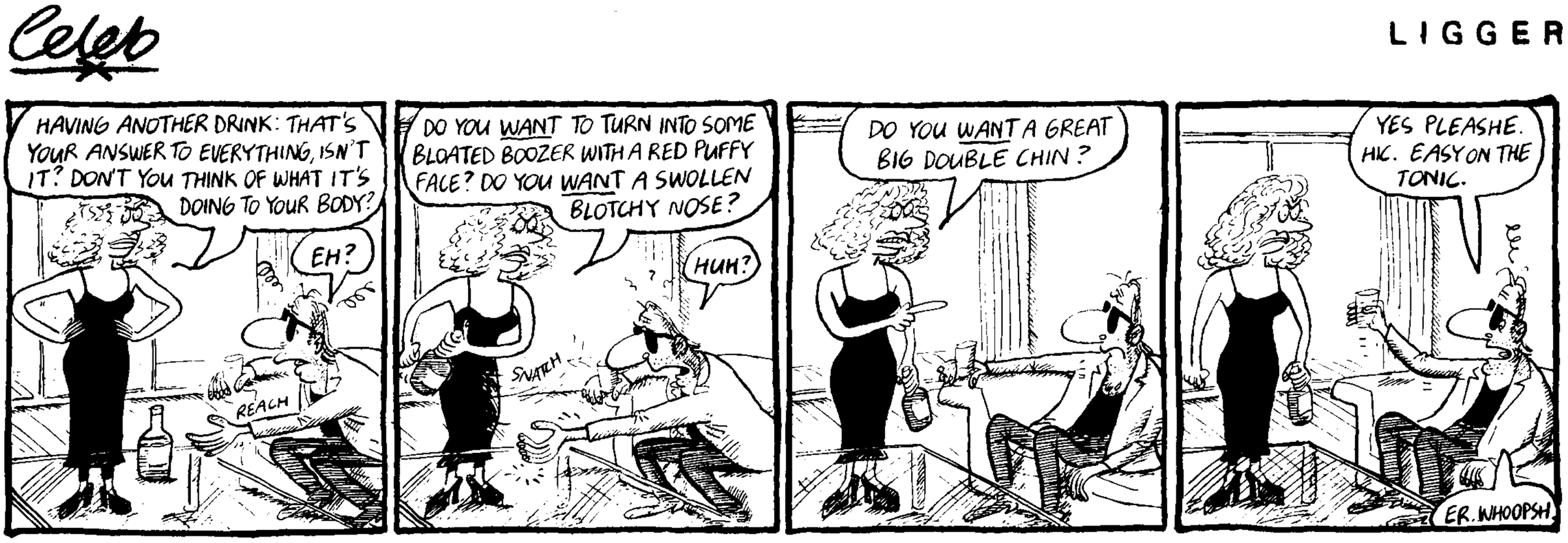
E.J. Thribb (17½)
(Reprinted by kind permission
of the Independent)



Great Bores Of Today.

"... it's crazy to pay full whack when you can get a really good deal if you're prepared to wait 'til the last minute there are amazing bargains but you have to shop around we've just had two weeks in Cos for only £59 all-in incredible isn't it? admittedly we had to leave from Newcastle but when you're on holiday you don't mind so much of course you have to take pot luck with the resort this year was Cos and actually the year before that was Cos but you can't complain when it's only £59 admittedly the hotel was some way from the beach and you had to get a taxi there and back and you had to pay for the sunbed and the umbrella and you can't expect haute cuisine at that sort of price if you like I'll give you the travel agent's number you ask for either Panjab or Soonam you can literally ring them the night before you travel and before you know where you're going you'll be in Cos at 3 the next morning..."

IRISH PUB
WEDNESDAY 14TH JUNE
WAKE UP IN DUBLIN
The second of our great prizes You could win a weekend for two in Dublin, fights and accomodation included.
Hoylake & West Kirby News


Celeb
LIGGER
HAVING ANOTHER DRINK: THAT'S YOUR ANSWER TO EVERYTHING, ISN'T IT? DON'T YOU THINK OF WHAT IT'S DOING TO YOUR BODY?
EH?
REACH
DO YOU WANT TO TURN INTO SOME BLOATED BOOZER WITH A RED PUFFY FACE? DO YOU WANT A SWOLLEN BLOTCHY NOSE?
HUH?
SNATCH
DO YOU WANT A GREAT BIG DOUBLE CHIN?
YES PLEASHE. HIC. EASY ON THE TONIC.
ER. WHOOPSH.

BOTT'S CLOSES DOWN AT LAST No one mourns

by Our Medical Staff **Baillie Vasectomy**

AFTER a prolonged campaign, Britain's least loved medical institution was finally closed down last night.

For centuries St Bottomley's, or Bott's, was known throughout the world for its dedicated lack of care for patients.

Situated in the heart of London, Botts specialised in long, boring speeches, packed with meaningless figures and bureaucratic jargon.

Said one leading surgeon Sir Vical Smear: "It is a national disgrace that they are closing St Bott's now. They should have closed it down years ago."

ST CAKE'S BOY BECOMES YOUNGEST EVER CABINET MINISTER

by Our Education And Employment Staff **Conrad Blackboard**

A SIXTH-former at the £41,000-a-term independent school St Cake's was today promoted straight into the Cabinet, becoming the first teenager ever to hold one of the major departments of state.

He is **William Squitt**, 16, who has been appointed to be Secretary of State for Customer Care.

The school's £41,000-a-week headmaster Mr Chenevix-Kipling praised his young pupil, saying: "Squitt is one of our ablest students. He has 7 GCSEs, and has been the Secretary of the school Debating Society for two terms."

Portaloo Sunset

Last term, Squitt proposed the motion: "This house believes that all unemployed people should be sent to prison."

Squitt also published a special edition of the school magazine, *Cakes and Cakemen*, arguing that the school should re-introduce capital punishment for drug-takers.

Squitt was a great admirer of Mr Michael Portaloo until last week, and once invited his hero to speak at the school's Mosley Society annual dinner.

Exclusive to Private Eye

John Cole on Major's Victory

HONDOOTEDLY Mostah Major tammy wynette Convincing Win yin tong tiddle-i-po Confounding Critics verklarte nacht Lanced The Boil jasminium nudiflorum Cleared The Air Once And For All mercury one-to-one Euro-Sceptics necrotising fascitis Mostah John Redwood donna maguire Fought A Clean Campaign cavalleria rusticana Affirmed His Loyalty hondetoit

Enhanced Standing Among Buckbunchers vanessa atlanta bhindi bhaji vindaloo Time To Close Ranks shuduppayaface United Party Cobinet Reshuffle Mostah Moichael Heseltine nurofen paracetamol High Profile New Job organo-phosphorus hap-hap-happy talk Disaster At Next Election yonty solomon Landslide Victory For Mostah Tony Blair nicole papa wilhelm furtwangler *(contd p. 94)*

trce yielding a red dye.—*adj.* **red-wood', -wud'** (*Scot.*), stark mad.—**in the red**, overdrawn at the

Chambers 20th C. Dictionary

PORTILLO (m.) Gap, opening. **2.** Wicket, gate. **3.** Narrow pass between hills. **4.** Private entrance. **5.** (**fig.**) Chip, cavity. **6.** Bird cage door. **7.** (**mil.**) Postern.

Spanish/English Dictionary

Exclusive to The Times, the Sunday Telegraph, the Spectator and anyone else who will pay a fortune for this deeply moving nonsense.

Coping With Jeff

by Dominic Lawson

LIKE most people, I used to think that one-legged alcoholics were not the sort of people one would like to have at one's dinner parties.

But when I became editor of the *Spectator*, I was taken to one side and told that I would have to assume lifelong responsibility for little Jeff.

Incredibly Bad Taste

When I first saw him, I was appalled. He was a tragic victim of Falling Down Syndrome, a disability which involves lying around all day in bed, watching the racing on the telly and mumbling incoherently that he is not getting enough money.

But as time went by, and I became more used to his pathetic attempts to communicate, I learned to love the inimitable way in which Jeff would ring me every morning to call me a "stupid c**t" and demand another pay rise.

It would have been easy to have rejected this sad caricature of humanity, with his one leg and unquenchable thirst.

But however tragic and absurd he is, Jeff deserves to live.

World Copyright Lawsontrash Productions

"OK, Mr Wilkins, clear your desk!"

IT'S PARTY TIME AS CLEGG WALKS FREE

by Our Man In Ulster
Lunchtime O'Bogside

NORTHERN Ireland has seen nothing like it for months.

Cars blazed. Stones were thrown. And old age pensioners danced openly with rage, as the news came through of the release of Private Clegg.

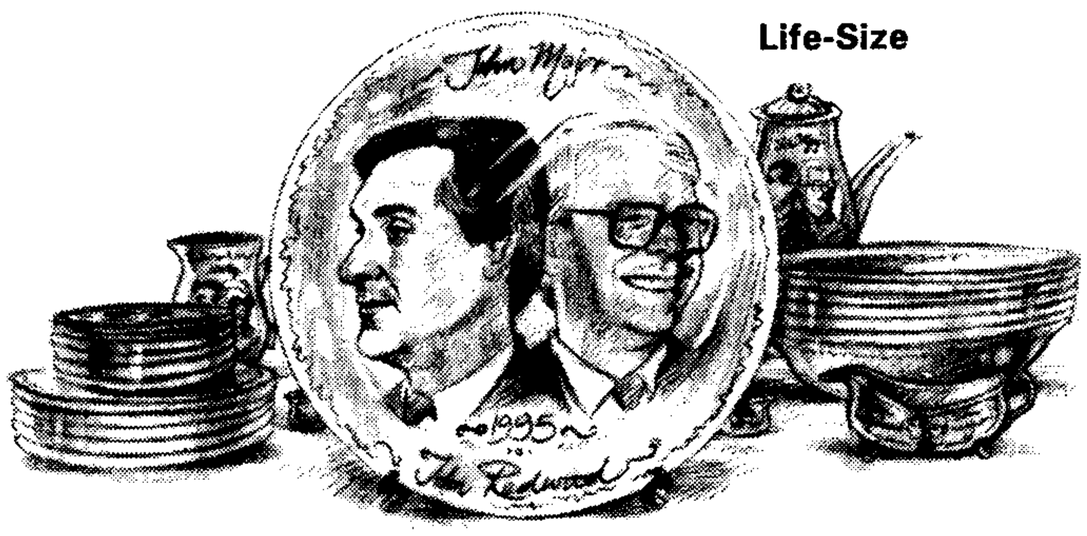
Said one typical Cardinal of All Ireland: "Releasing this man is a crime against humanity. That Paddy Mayhew should be strung up. It is the only language these bastards understand."

Cardinal Daily O'Telegraph is 106.

New From Gnome!

THE 1995 TORY LEADERSHIP ELECTION

64-Piece Commemorative Dinner Service



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8 Side-Dishes
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Guaranteed to improve vision and hearing these tablets are manufactured from the jelly of the rare Neasdonian ants whose habitat is a closely-guarded secret known only to Gnome Health Laboratories. **£899.99**

Rich in Vitamin B72, Red Nettle Tablets are nature's remedy for strengthening finger and toe nails.
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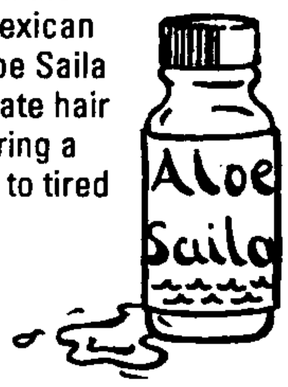

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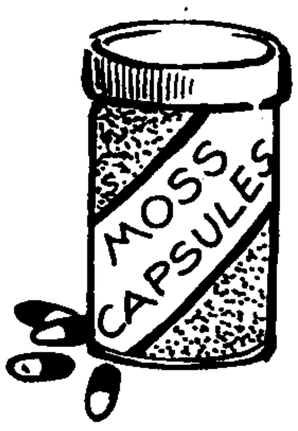
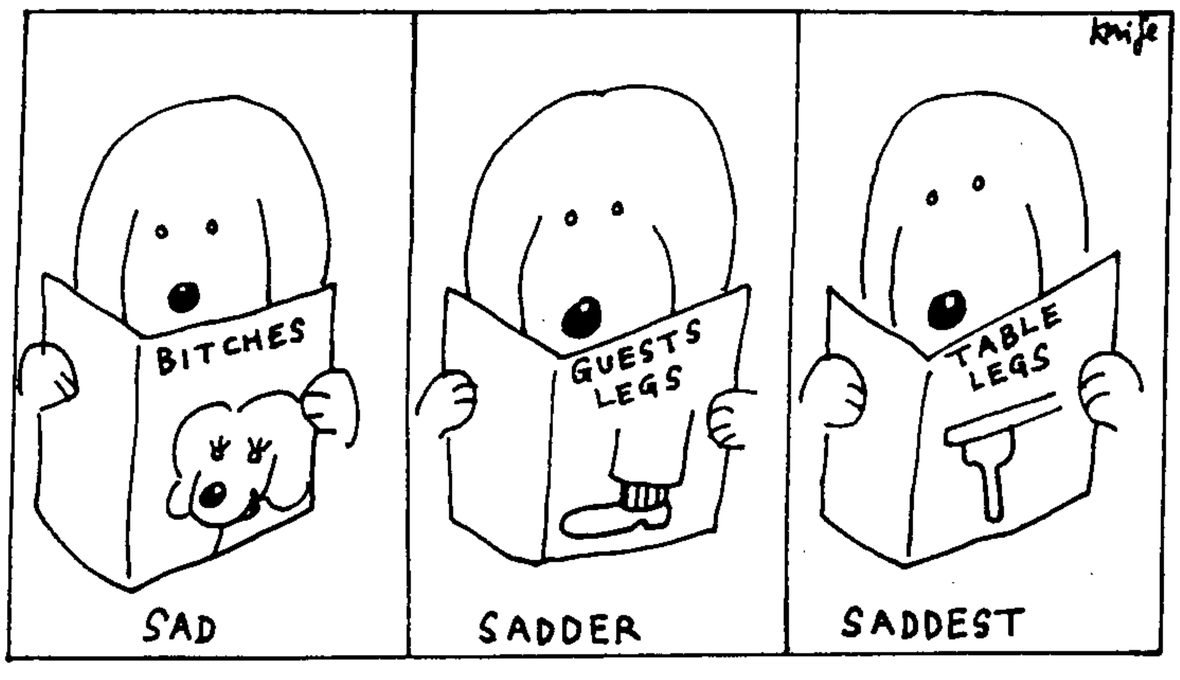
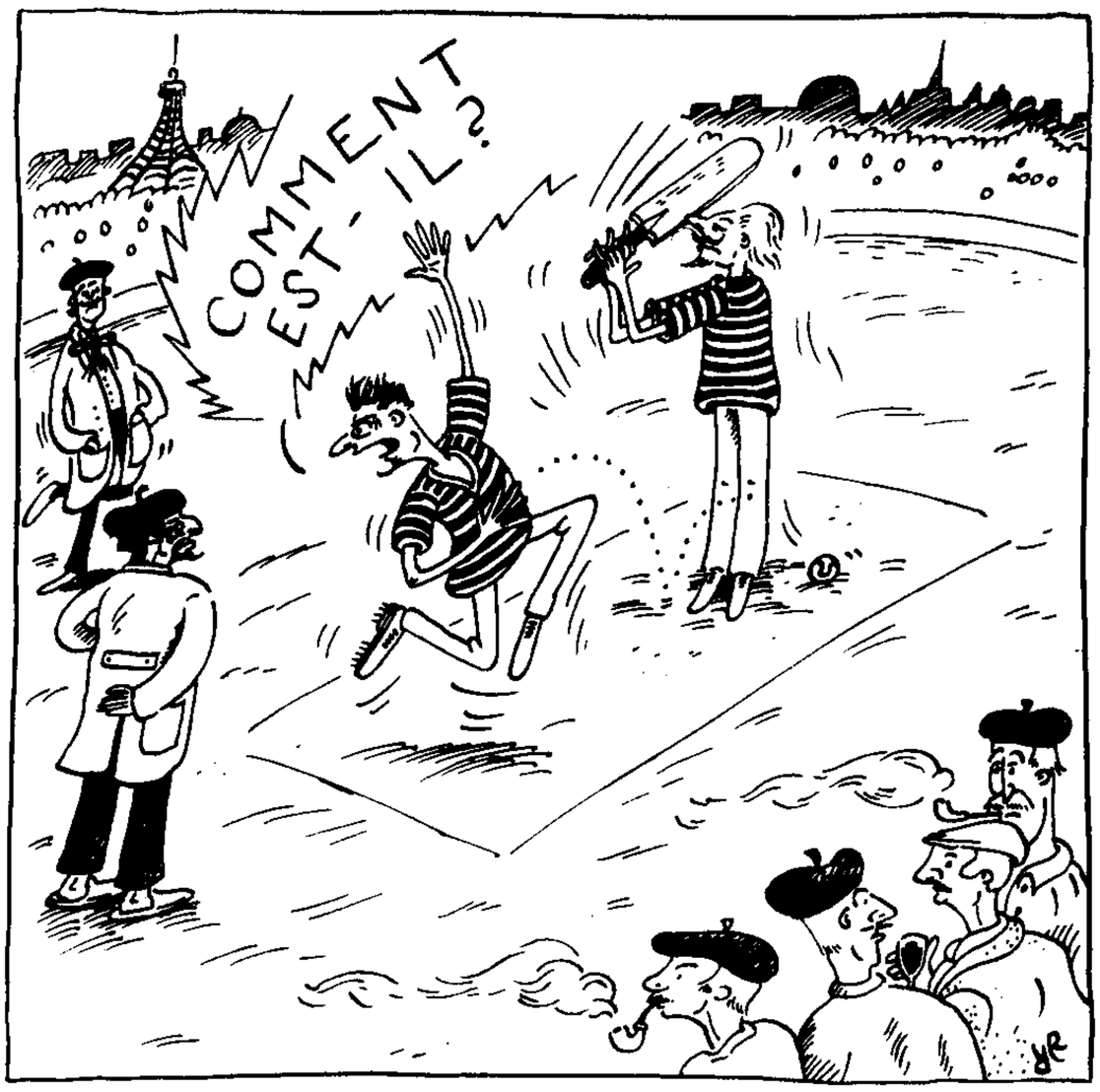


For full-colour brochure of all Gnome Health products write to Box 137, Vitamin House, Getwell Road, Durham DRX 49Y.



TEST MATCH



French Cricket *(Parc des Princes 1905)*

EYE SPORT

by Our Crime Correspondent

WIMBLEDON

JEFF TANTRUM, the US 94th seed, was yesterday given three years for attacking a ball girl.

FOOTBALL

NEASDEN goalie Wally Foot was yesterday remanded in custody on charges of taking a £2 million "bung" for "throwing" last year's Bradford & Bingley North Circular Cup Final.

CRICKET

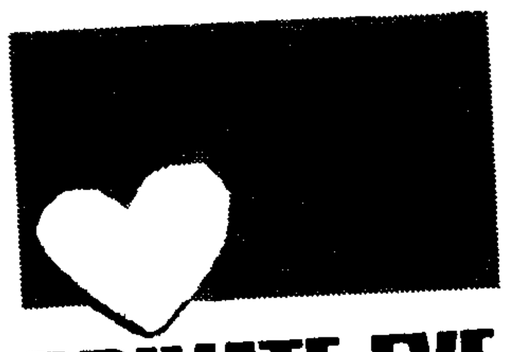
POLICE are investigating accusations of racial incitement following the publication in the monthly *Bats & Batsmen* of an article entitled "Them Darkies Is Useless".

WIMBLEDON (again)

HANNAH Bollick-Steroid (Croatia) was yesterday tested positive for drug abuse following her sensational first round defeat by Britain's Sharon Carter-Ruck, who is 10,171st in the world rankings.

Where Are They Now? No. 94 **John Redwood**

IN the summer of 1995 British politics were rocked to their foundations when a hitherto unknown young cabinet minister called John Redwood decided that he would like to be prime minister. For the next seven days the nation's press and television screens were devoted 24 hours a day to profiles, interviews and press conferences with the man the country knew simply as "John Redwood". But then the great day came, John Major remained prime minister and Redwood retired back to the obscurity whence he had come.



PRIVATE EYE

"It's sound on the European Single Currency question.
"It's tops for listings.
"And editor Ian has a cheeky twinkle in his eye when he appears on my favourite TV programme *Celebrity Squares!***"**
Mrs Elsie Prunehat, Bath

A Sylvie Krin Summer Special

To err is human...

THE STORY SO FAR: Handsome debonair actor Hugh Grant has been caught having oral sex with a black prostitute. Now read on...

THE glorious summer sunshine shone brilliantly from a clear blue sky, sending a golden glow among the ancient rolling hills of Wiltshire. The sleepy stone cottages of Little Legover basked in the midsummer heat. Bees hummed lazily in the hollyhocks and a thousand long-lens cameras clicked rhythmically from the top of 14-foot ladders.

Every rheumy eye of Fleet Street's finest was focussed on the deeply moving scene being played out below them on the well-manicured lawn of the Old Manor House.

Beneath the timeless mullioned windows, in the shade of a gnarled fellatio tree, a young man held out a plate of salad to the most beautiful woman the world had ever known.

"I can explain everything," he stammered, for the hundredth time, "if only you would listen."

"We *are* listening," came the reply from a hundred voices behind the wall. "Can you speak up a bit?"

"Sorry," said the young man. "I'll take it from the top. Now, where were we? Oh yes — I've been a bloody fool. I don't know what came over me."

"How could you?" she sobbed, as huge translucent tears welled up in her perfectly-formed eyes and gushed unchecked down the exquisite peach-skin purity of her cheeks.

The world-famous heartthrob, whose films had grossed 2000 billion dollars worldwide, put out a hand and made as if to place it consolingly on her swan-white shoulder.

"Take your filthy paws off me," she spat, like an angry lioness, her face contorted into a hideous scar of hatred — hardly recognisable as the pouting beauty whose peerless features had graced every page of the *Daily Telegraph* each morning for the past six months.

"It was a moment of madness," he stammered in explanation. "It was only because I was lonely without you."

"Don't lie to me!" she shrieked. "You can save your lies for the courts."

So saying, she hurled the plate of uneaten salad at his suntanned, finely-chiselled features. A delicate trickle of vinaigrette ran down his Reeves & Mortimer polo shirt and from behind the wall came the raucous laughter of the world's highest-paid journalists. They had got what they had come for.

A STRANGE bearded figure in a low cut dress sat alone in the first-class compartment of the 8.14 to Paddington. In her rococo-patterned Benetton travel bag were just a few hurriedly snatched up keepsakes of the dying embers of their love.

What did they mean now, these tattered clippings, bank statements and old copies of *Hello*?

"Ticket please Miss Hurley." The conductor's voice interrupted her reverie.

"But, how did you know?" she whispered, in a faltering voice.

"It was the beard," replied the kindly official from beneath his Great Western Trains turban. "I've seen it on the TV."

Suddenly the mobile trilled on the seat beside her.

"Excuse me," she said. "It may be the studio."

Cupping the telephone to her immaculate, Dresden-shepherdess-like ear, she murmured "Who is this?"

"It's me."

The manly voice was racked with pain and self-doubt. "I've been thinking it over. Us, I mean."

Her heart beat faster, in time with the thudding of the train wheels as it slowed imperiously to a halt due to signalling problems between Swindon and Didcot Parkway.

"Me too."

"What I mean..." he said.

"Yes?"

"You know, we've got to stay together. For the sake of..."

"Yes, darling?"

"...for the sake of the money".

"Oh darling, I'm so happy. That's what my agent said too."

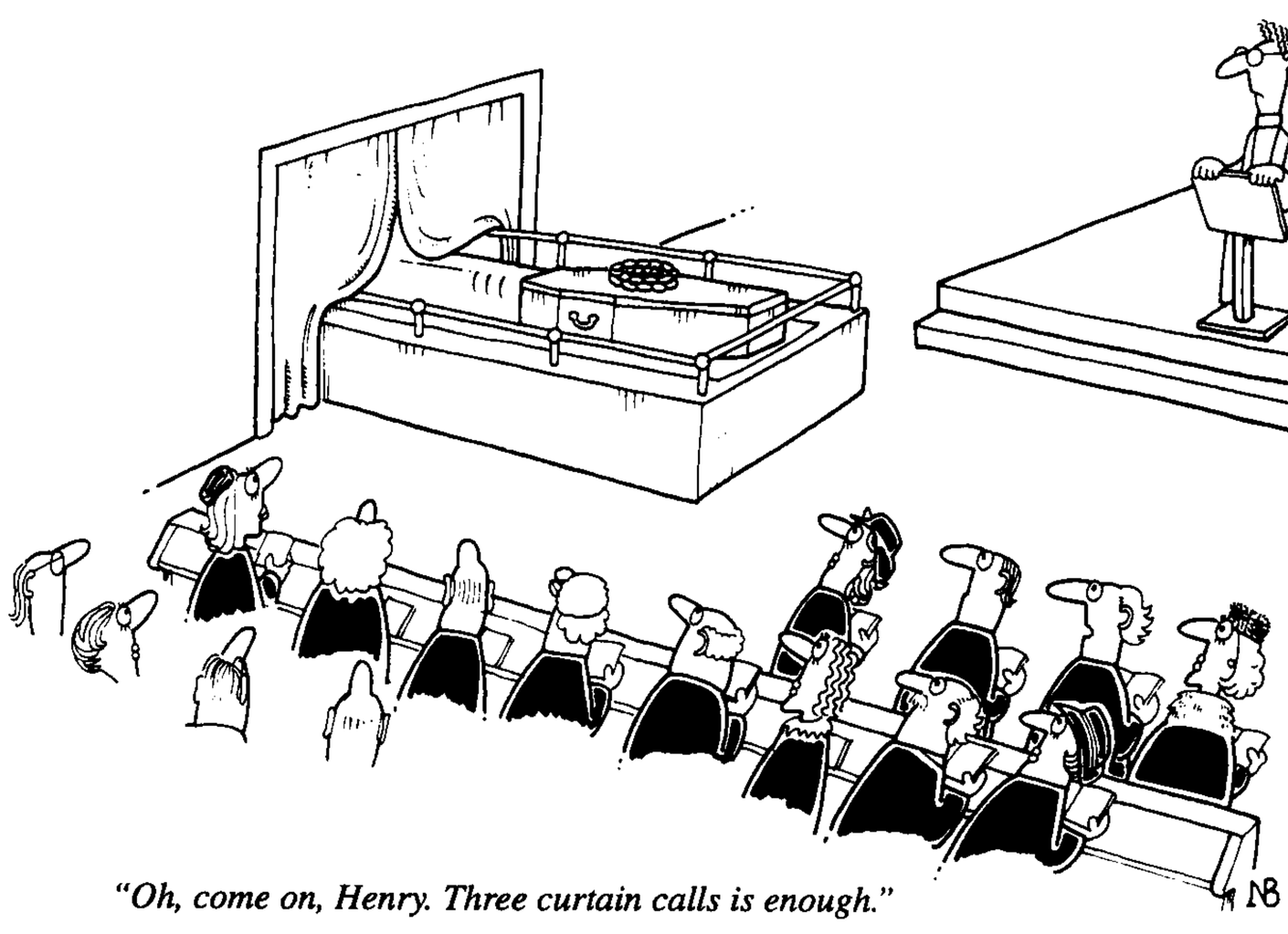
She slowly put the phone back onto the seat, and the whole world suddenly seemed to be lit by the glow of a thousand rainbows.

From somewhere she seemed to hear a disembodied voice.

"This is your senior conductor speaking. This train has terminated. We advise customers to continue their journey by alternative forms of transport."

NEXT WEEK: But To Forgive Divine.

© S. Krin 1995.



"Oh, come on, Henry. Three curtain calls is enough."

DIARY

It's often been said of me, and I think rightly, that I have built my global media resource and opportunity base on strong corporate loyalty. It amounts to something like a family feeling, with all of us concerned for each other's well-being, health and sheer professionalism.

The last time I saw my good friend Andrew Neil, I greeted him with one of my warm handshakes, as befits our strong, twelve-year working relationship. For legal reasons, my office data-linked satellite-recorder was a witness to the easy-going nature of our little chat.

"How long have you been an ex-editor, Andrew?" I asked, benevolently.

"No, Rupert," he chuckled. "I'm not an ex-editor — I'm an editor!"

"You don't want to live in the past, Andrew," I smiled. "How's the wife?"

"Well — er —"

"Kids?"

"I — er, to be honest, Rupert, I, er..."

"Dog?"

"Well, er, Rupert, I... er... don't actually, er —"

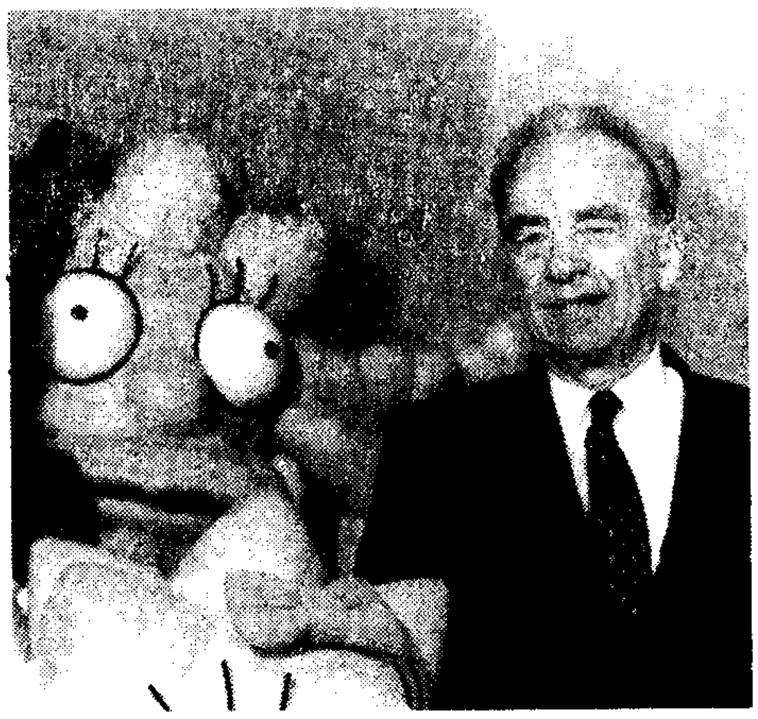
"You don't? Well, I'm giving you a few years off to get yourself a wife, some kids and a dog. We like a family feeling in this corporation. Cheers. Next!"

"Thank you Rupert."

Over the years, I've occasionally been criticised by the Establishment for this relaxed, shirt-sleeved, anti-elitist approach. But my personal charm has never been in question. And if it ever was I'd set my dogs to pour a bucketful of shit over the bastards. I've gotten a bit sick of being the whipping boy for every damn trendy liberal and limp-wristed Harvard Marxist in town, d'y'hear?

I make no bones about it. I'm a Christian and proud of it. I've got a lot of respect for Jesus Christ as a world-class communicator with an international field of operations second only to my own. Of course, I take issue with him on a number of points — his defence of the profit motive could be a helluva lot more robust, his Gospels reveal a startling ignorance of the full range of opportunities offered by the digital electronic network, and he's soft on sin — but overall, you've got to hand it to the guy, his performance at the lower end of the market remains pretty steady. We at News International have made some massive advances in the past few years, but if I'm realistic I can't see us taking control of his global operation before the century's out.

But that's not to say I haven't got a lot of time for the Devil, too. In many ways, we think alike.



RUPERT MURDOCH

Most of my senior executives have come to us by way of him, and it shows in their single-minded allegiance to my aims and values. Like me, Satan's a guy who hasn't got much time for all that third world garbage. Again like me, he prefers to concentrate on giving the people what they want, and now we're talking about murder, we're talking about torture, we're talking about halfway decent rape, we're talking about the brutal mugging of old ladies in the safety of their own homes. For years, I'd have killed to get my hands on his empire — he's as interested in real consumer choice as I am. But in those days there was no hope of taking over such a smooth, well-established operation. So now it gives me great pleasure to be able to announce that we'll be going into global partnership together, creating a great many new job opportunities through a cross-fertilisation of our media interests. Good news for democracy? Judging by the results of what Satan and I have already managed in partnership together, I'm delighted to say that the public clearly thinks so. And that must be good news for democracy.

"Angry? Yes, I'm angry. Of course I'm bloody angry!" I dictated to my senior speechwriter, Stothard, the day the so-called Government announced it was shackling me to a max of 10 per cent of the British media market. I was dictating an article for immediate release. "Angry because the Government has pissed all over the guy who won them the last four elections."

"Shall we make that 'Angry because the Government has been seduced into championing the average at the expense of the excellent'?" said Stothard.

"Yeah, that's got a nice ring to it. Then put — let's see, yes — 'But after anger comes revenge'."

"Shouldn't that be 'But after anger comes reflection'?"

"'Re-election'? Not on your nelly! We're letting Blair in next time."

"I actually said 'reflection'. 'But after anger comes reflection.' It has a nice, mature, reasonable air to it."

"Okay, have it your own way, Jenkins."

"Stothard."

"Have it your own way, Stothard. Then we should list all we've done for Taiwan."

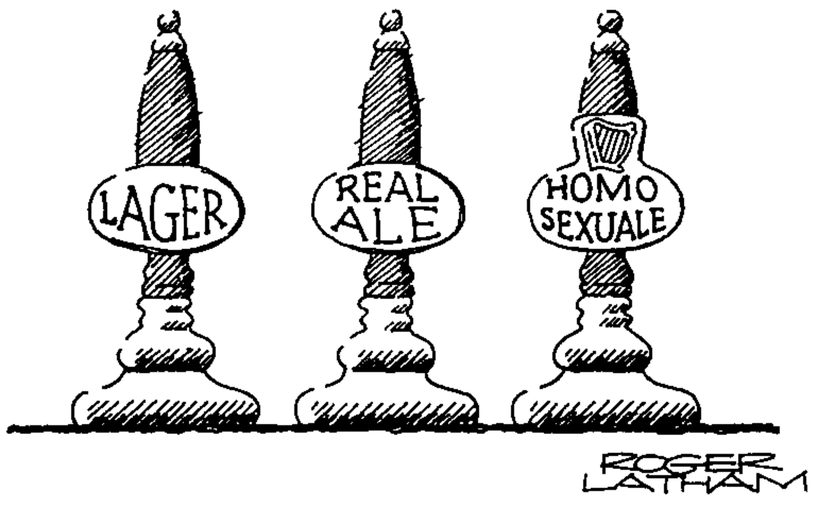
"Britain."

"Britain, that's the one. Let's see, we've given them all 22 repeats of *The Persuaders*, we've got the entire *Jason King* back catalogue in our summer schedule, on the print front, we're bloody giving away *The Times* and, Christ, we were the first to offer them tits and bums in the soaraway *Sun*!"

"You mean 'We've invigorated journalism and opened up media opportunities in software, satellite, conditional access and on-line information services to increase consumer choice'?"

"That's what I said, Wilson. Don't you ever listen?"

Aged sixty-something, I've just about earned the right to relax. Let me tell you how I go about it. Sometime between 4.00 am and 5.00 am I make a point of leaning back in my seat, asking the air stewardess to bring me a pillow, opening the third laptop on the right and taking a leisurely print-out of the profit and loss statements of my 531 subsidiary companies world-wide. I then take a cool refreshing glass of water, dismiss an executive to get comfortable, unloosen my tie, get out my phone and waken seven or eight of my deputy editors worldwide to check they're ready to take over the moment the senior position becomes available. I appreciate these little chats: they help make those who work for me feel more at ease, encouraging a relaxed atmosphere of healthy competition in the workplace. Finally, I enjoy the latest headlines from my global stable of top quality newspapers — "Monster Black Gay Nun Rapes Headless Tot", "Dalai Lama Threatens: 'Pay Up Or I Pull Its Wings Off' ", "Top Tory Removes Trousers Nightly", "Baywatch Pamela And Major Ron In Fred West Love Triangle". But, as I was saying to Chairman Deng Xioping the other day, we must never let up in our struggle. The battle for 1) Free speech 2) The public interest and 3) the integrity of the marketplace will never be a pushover. And if ever we relax, the three of 'em might just win.



The Sun

Portillo is considered one of the most eminent disciples of former Prime Minister Buroness Thatcher who keeps criticizing its successor's management of the European policy. She said in an interview to be screamed by BBC TV tonight, "we quarreled with Europe and struggled to get a fair deal."

Arab News

RARE UNSIGNED copy of Lady Thatchers new Memoirs, £80 ono. Tel: 01932 245

Herald & News

Literary Review

Ford unpopular

Independence Day
Richard Ford
(Harvill, £14.99)

THE day they let TJ out of the penitentiary was the day Betsey-Jane took the afternoon off from washing plates in the diner to find out she had pancreatic cancer. Driving back that night in the old Chevy, past Ossawatomie Gap where the fireflies winked out of the twilight, stopping the car at the old bridge where we'd frolicked and lingered as kids in the bright dawn of our lives, we tried to figure out how these great patches of past time had got filled in, how our lives couldn't contract enough to fill the aching spaces that remained…

Actually I am making this up, but such a paragraph could be profitably inserted in nearly any of the hip modern American novels that get published in this country to the rapturous greetings of young men at the *Guardian* and *Sunday Times*.

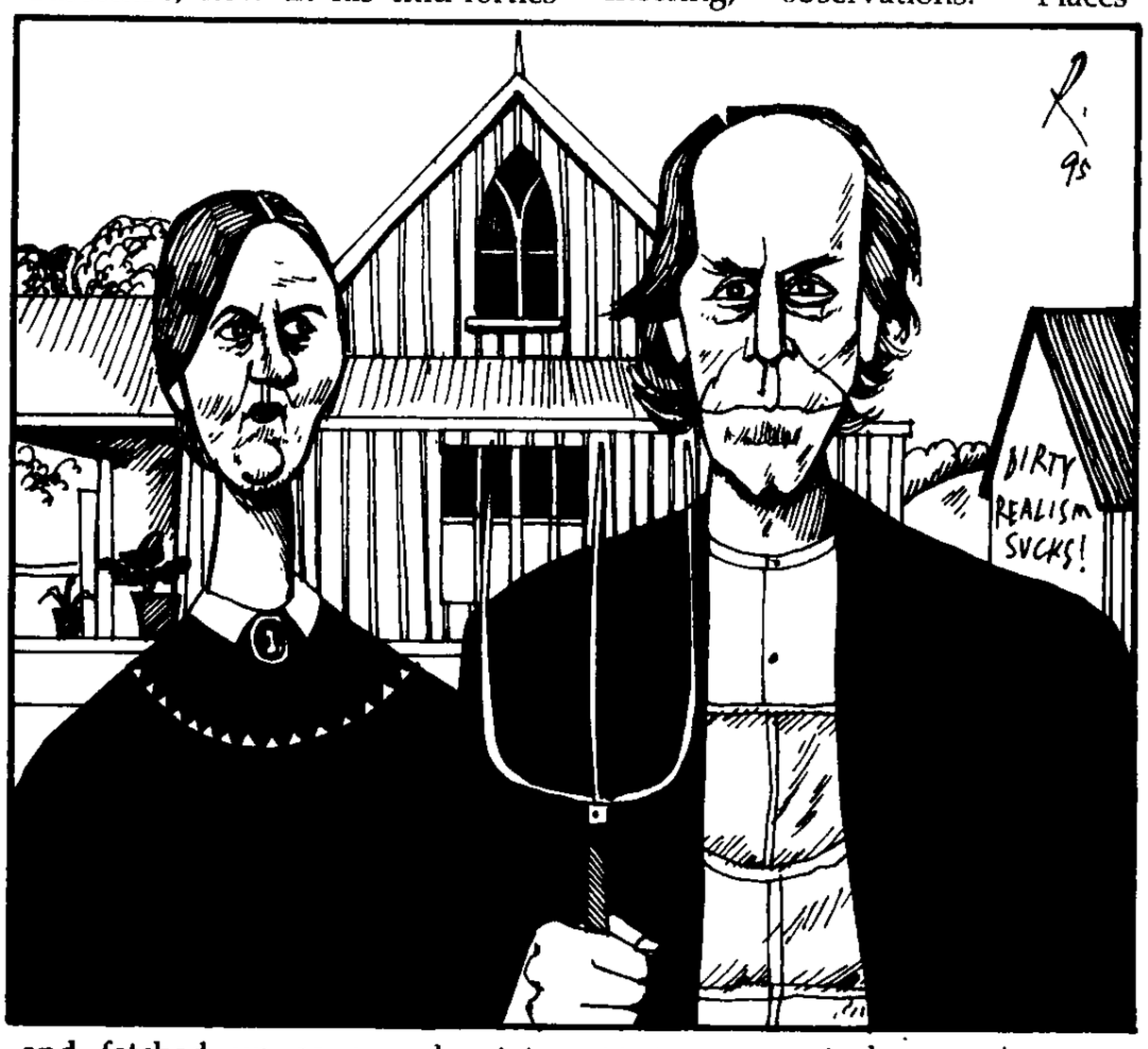
The voice is, aw, that characteristic Yankee voice: downhome, out-of-town, the ain't-nobody-here-but-me-babe voice. Where does it come from? And where is it going?

One of the smartest scams ever pulled by Bill Buford as a means of publicising his famous literary magazine, the *Boy's Own Paper* — sorry, make that *Granta* — was the invention of "Dirty Realism". Raymond Carver. Richard Ford. Jayne Anne Phillips. T. C. Boyle (seriously folks). All of a sudden the air hummed with a clutch of new names, previously known only to exceptionally brainy readers of the *Times Literary Supplement*, and almost overnight a movement kicked its baby legs and stirred: a whole raft of novels set out there in the big American heartland, full of tough-guy talk and inarticulate epiphanies.

Predictably it worked like a dream. English critics, tired of pallid homegrown product, loved this kind of thing (see for instance the annual gush over Cormac McCarthy and his paragraphs of untranslated Spanish) and more than anything, Raymond Carver having died by now, they loved Richard Ford, who obligingly set to work to recreate American literature in the image that had been fashioned for him. The result, among other things, was the highly partial *Granta Book of the American Story* (1992) in which you can find a great deal of "The day they let TJ out of the penitentiary…" but not, curiously, anything by Philip Roth, Saul Bellow or Truman Capote.

Independence Day, long-awaited and already welcomed by half a dozen encomiasts, is more of the same, in fact the next clearing along a stretch of trail that began with Ford's earlier novel *The Sportswriter*.

Its hero, good-natured Frank Bascombe, now in his mid-forties



and fetched up as a real estate salesman in New Jersey, has a number of knots to unravel ranging from his relationship with a potentially delinquent son to a particularly tricky deal with a couple of bozos from Vermont. But what he really has to come to terms with is (and it's, yes sirree, 1988, election year, which gives the whole caboodle a national significance) is — uh — *life* — his, his dependents' and, inevitably, his fellow Americans'.

What he also has to come to terms with, unfortunately, is how to fill a 450-page novel whose action is played out in a matter of days. One good way of doing this is digressions: for example the pages of groaning detail appended to the tedious Markhams with whom he is trying to clinch the real estate deal. Another good way is lists. Eyeing a stream of traffic out on the freeway, Bascombe can never just content himself by observing that the drivers are restless to travel someplace. No, he has to start speculating on their destinations: "a new home in Barrington, a holiday rental on Lake Memphremagog, an awkward reunion at a more successful brother's chalet at Mount Whiteface…" None of which has very much to do with Frank Bascombe or indeed the wider atmosphere of the book.

This being a novel about coming to terms with life, a Godammit Alice I'm middle-aged and what does it all *mean*? kind of novel, it has a great many homely, and for the most part cheering, observations: "Places never co-operate by revering you back when you need it"; "Every age in life has its own little pennant to fly". " 'Phyllis, I figure we've all got scars and bruises," Frank tells down in the mouth Mrs Markham, "but I just don't want them to cause you to miss a damn good deal on a wonderful house when it's in your grasp here.' "

You see, despite the misadventures, despite the kid nearly losing an eye in a baseball accident and many another setback, *it's all gonna be OK*. There is some sharp writing in *Independence Day* — notably Frank's bewildered confrontations with cops, security guards and the whole paraphernalia of Fortress America — but most of it is just the oiliest middle-aged spread. Those dirty realists, believe me *hon*, they were just regular guys after all.

Books & Bookmen

■ VIKING PENGUIN is an infinitely more sophisticated publishing house than monolithic HarperCollins.

When Penguin's managing director, Trevor Glover, realised that for the third time in five years HarperCollins' executive chairman Eddie "McBastard" Bell was going to wield the axe and further dismember a once great publishing house, "Kid" Glover saw his chance to crouch behind McBastard's kilt and "restructure" Viking Penguin again.

His opening gambit was to sack poor, mad bicyclist Andrew Franklin, the boss of Hamish Hamilton who had the thankless task six years ago of trying to succeed Sir Sincere Sinclair-Stevenson when he was ousted.

"Kid" insists Hamish Hamilton will survive down the years as a proper publishing house. Not so. For publishing today, as the latest manuring of the night soil at HarperCollins attests, is about marketing and little else.

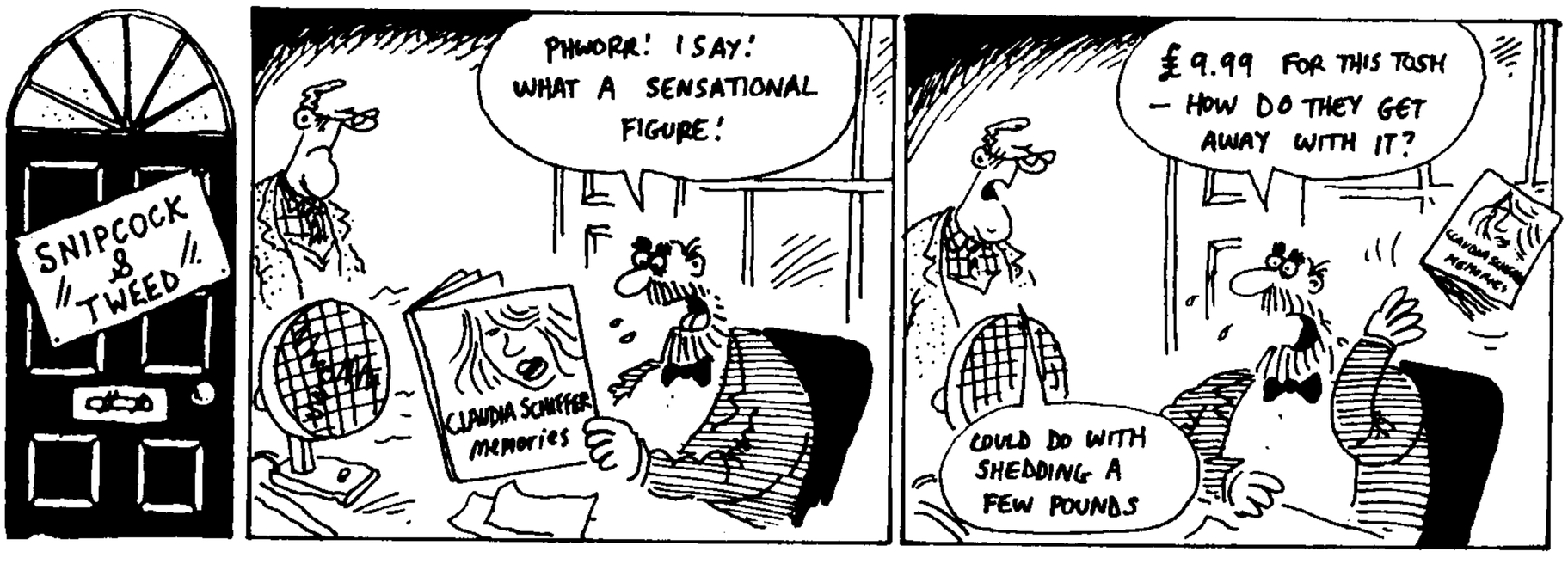
What is extraordinary is that the architects of the conglomerates still try to pretend, "McBastard" being the biggest self-deluder of the lot, that it is not their destruction of publishing as it used to be which is so catastrophic but that the "market" has changed or that people don't want to buy books any more, or that they're all buying videos or lottery tickets. The people at the head of publishing houses used to understand books and strove — even Collins in its magnificent middlebrow way — to publish the best of them.

Now they employ inexperienced, time-serving editors who are scared to raise their heads above the parapet and who have as little concern for culture and civilisation as they have an understanding of literature. Who has just been appointed to succeed Frances Coady as publisher of Vintage? Not the logical choice, editor Will Sulkin, who has made that list and Pimlico one of the best around and who reads the books before he buys them, but marketing woman Caroline Michel.

At least at Penguin editors still rule and it is nice to see Tony Lacey in charge of the general division with the Empress Clare Alexander answerable to him. Tony will have to try to make her understand that every book she wants to publish isn't necessarily the best book she's ever read. But it was naughty of fiction editor the Queen Fanny Blake to say that she'd rather resign than report to the Empress.

Perhaps the oddest conglomerate news is that Richard Charkin is said to have resigned from Reed, whose Consumer Books division has been put up for sale by joint owners Elsevier at an asking price of £468 million. Charkin has offered a management buy-out, and £200 million. Where could the ex-Oxford University Press executive find that sort of money? From disenchanted Paul Hamlyn, who would like his old companies back. Nice one, Paul.

'Bookworm'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PHWORR! I SAY! WHAT A SENSATIONAL FIGURE!
CLAUDIA SCHIFFER memories
£9.99 FOR THIS TOSH — HOW DO THEY GET AWAY WITH IT?
COULD DO WITH SHEDDING A FEW POUNDS

footnotes

MoD police in shock baton charge

GREGORY POKERY

CAUTIONED: Gregory

RECENT revelations on television that a big British company is prepared to export illegal electro-shock batons worth millions of pounds spurred the ministry of defence police into prompt action — not against the company, but against the journalist who broke the news.

"The Torture Trail" went out on Channel Four *Despatches* in January. The investigative journalist Martyn Gregory had heard from a reliable source that British Aerospace was selling electro-shock batons to dubious regimes. These batons have for some time been denounced by Amnesty International as "the universal tool of the torturer".

Gregory's source could not be revealed without certain victimisation, and as the information could not be checked publicly Gregory resorted to subterfuge.

He wrote to British Aerospace as a mythical agent "Frank Davies" on behalf of a mythical Beirut businessman "Samir Mansoor" asking if BAe could sell him electro-shock weapons. Certainly, was the reply. "Mansoor" was checked out by the hawks of British intelligence and given the go-ahead. Accordingly, flanked by an actor playing "Mansoor", suitably equipped with a secret camera, and calling himself "Frank Davies", Gregory sailed past the ministry of defence police security guards who keep watch over BAe's Royal Ordnance arms depot at Chorley in Lancashire.

BATON FOR SALE: Philip Morris of BAe

He and his bogus "client" were greeted with great enthusiasm by Martin Trengove, head of BAe's sales to Saudi Arabia, and Philip Morris, a top salesman. The advantages and the success of electric shock weapons were set out with much vigour by Morris and Trengove. They had a specimen baton to hand, which they showed off proudly. At one stage Morris blurted out that his firm had flogged 8,000 such batons to Saudi Arabia and that these had been "swallowed up" in the enormous Al Yamamah arms deal with the Saudi government, signed by Michael Heseltine, then defence secretary, and prime minister Margaret Thatcher in 1985.

On 20 October last year, Philip Morris wrote to "Frank Davies" setting out the terms for the sale of 10,000 electronic riot shields and 5,000 electro-shock batons at a price of $3,620,000.

When all this appeared on television — together with the news that the import and export of such weapons was illegal — there was a bit of an outcry. Angry viewers wrote to their MPs, who sent the letters on to the man responsible for export control, the president of the board of trade, Michael Heseltine.

The DTI responded with a flood of letters denying allegations of illegal export, and "in particular" denying Philip Morris's claim about Al Yamamah. Heseltine then went on to accuse the programme makers of "false and contrived charges", "scaremongering" and of having "persuaded the companies in question to offer to supply goods for the purpose of making a story that otherwise did not exist". This view was not shared by Amnesty International, which named the programme "best TV documentary" in its press awards last month. Gregory promptly sued the department of trade and industry for libel. Senior counsel advised him his case was "open and shut".

A few weeks later Martyn Gregory's lawyers were approached by Det Chief Inspector Bill Wallace, of the MoD police, who asked for an interview with the journalist. Gregory was at first impressed that the police were so assiduously following up his allegations of illegal arms exporting. But his reaction changed when he discovered that he himself was the suspect. The inspector wanted to interview him on suspicion that he had incited British Aerospace to sell the illegal equipment; and indeed had himself taken part in illegal imports because he had handled one of the weapons on television.

On 26 June, Martyn Gregory was interviewed by Mr Wallace and a colleague at his lawyers' offices, under caution. He denied the charges and refused to answer any questions about his journalistic activities. The policemen went away and are still debating whether to bring any charges.

Meanwhile at British Aerospace there have been no charges against the men who appeared on television (and wrote letters) offering to flog illegal weapons. Mr Morris was suspended for nine weeks pending an investigation, which has apparently cleared him. He is now in a different department on the same pay and the same terms of employment. Mr Trengove is in the same job.

RUDY GLEESON

■ NO ONE is more important in a magistrate's court than the clerk, who is a trained lawyer.

A clerk's advice to magistrates can be crucial to their findings. So when last year an Asian man was on trial at London's Horseferry Road magistrates' court and the clerk, Mr Donough Gleeson, made some unflattering remarks about "coloured people", the lawyers for the defendant were shocked.

When their client was found guilty and sentenced to 180 hours community service, they took his case to the divisional court, insisting that Mr Gleeson's remarks suggested he was racially biased and that the trial could not have been fair.

The court, (Lord Justice McCowan and Mr Justice Dyson) agreed. In February this year they quashed the conviction on the ground that there was "a real danger that the clerk was racially biased against the applicant/defendant who was Asian".

Mr Gleeson is still at Horseferry Road magistrates' court where many defendants are black or brown. The *Eye* asked Christine Glenn, acting chief justices' clerks' executive at the inner London magistrates' courts service, what has happened since the judicial review, which was in February, five months ago. She confirmed the facts of the case and added: "The remarks allegedly made by the clerk were made during the course of an adjournment and in the absence of the justices, and the clerk never retired with the justices but gave them advice in open court, all of which was heard by the applicant/defendant and the lawyers on both sides."

She said her committee "is committed to its equal opportunities policy statement which states in terms that there must be no discrimination on the grounds of sex, marital status, race colour, ethnic or national origins... and there must be equality of treatment for all those who are in any way involved with the inner London magistrates' courts service."

She concluded: "Disciplinary proceedings have been instituted by me against Mr Gleeson but they have not yet been concluded. Under these circumstances, you will understand that I cannot comment further. It would be unfortunate indeed if any public comment led to these disciplinary proceedings being affected in any way."

Bonus of contention

■ "THE past year was a period of great activity and achievement at the London stock exchange," boasted a press release on 20 June.

"Total income", for instance, was, er, *down* £16.1m from the previous year. "New listings" were, er, "*down* on the previous year". And there was, er, "no significant change in income levels from settlement or from trading fees for the provision of trading and information services".

The salary of the new chief executive, Michael Lawrence, was *up* at £228,750. In case anyone thought this rather measly, the renumeration committee topped it up with a £100,000 bonus.

The *Eye* asked the stock exchange how the £100,000 bonus was arrived at. "There are different targets for different individuals," said a spokeswoman, "but what those targets are we really can't disclose."

The spokeswoman agreed that the stock exchange was always urging its member-companies to give their shareholders the maximum possible information — especially about directors' pay.

INVESTOR: Tim Aitken in 1983

PANAMA CABAL

AS Jonathan Aitken MP resigns from the cabinet to spend more time with his libel lawyers, he may finally be able to solve the old mystery of the strange fate of Investment Intelligence Ltd (Intel).

In December 1981 a controlling stake in this company was bought by a company called Aitken Investments SA. The price of the stake was £29,900. In May 1982, five months later, the same stake was sold by Aitken Investments to Aitken Hume PLC, the new banking business of the ambitious Aitken cousins, Jonathan and Tim. Aitken Hume was a public company with many other shareholders. The price paid for Intel was £363,000 — 16 times the price paid a few weeks earlier.

Aitken Investments SA, a private firm registered in Panama, had made a vast profit out of the sale to a public firm registered in London. When the outside directors of Aitken Hume heard of this, they were furious. They commissioned a report from top City solicitors Clifford Chance to find out how such a huge profit had been made at their expense and who had benefited.

Clifford Chance spent a lot of time and money trying to find out who was behind Aitken Investments SA. In Panama there were no documents to help them. A circular on 1 April 1982 had described it as "an investment company founded by members of the family of the late Lord Beaverbrook who are resident in Canada and the United States". The circular also revealed that "various other investors, including some from the Middle East, had become shareholders".

The Clifford Chance report seemed in little doubt that Timothy Aitken was the prime mover in Aitken Investments SA, and mused about whether his role in the Intel transaction was in breach of his fiduciary trust as a director of Aitken Hume PLC.

What about Jonathan? He fully cooperated with the Clifford Chance investigators. He told them he had always assumed Aitken Investments SA was his cousin's company, and owned Timothy's interests in land, houses and horses. Jonathan agreed that he and his wife had bought 1,000 shares in the Panama company in 1983 -- but that was after the Intel deal. He also said he had never had any voting shares.

The solicitors were puzzled by this, since the Panama company had never had more than 500 non-voting shares — so Jonathan could not have had 1,000 of them. Even more surprisingly, the 1982 report of the directors of Aitken Hume, which covered the period of the Intel sale, stated quite clearly that Jonathan had a beneficial interest in Aitken Investments SA. This, the investigators concluded, was in direct conflict with Jonathan's memorandum to Aitken Hume directors which said he hadn't had any shares in the Panama company until 1983.

The Clifford Chance report did not discover who pocketed the fantastic profit on the Intel deal, nor who lay behind the mysterious Aitken Investments SA. In the event the Aitken Hume directors decided to take no action and the matter was dropped. Recently, however, Tim Aitken told an inquisitive journalist that if he wants to find out the real beneficiary of Aitken Investments SA, "you have to go and see the dear old prince down in Saudi Arabia".

Historical Footnote: Jonathan Aitken got into a little trouble as the first chairman of TV-am when he failed to disclose, as he was obliged to, that a big stake in the company was owned by his rich friends in Saudi Arabia.

Laughing all the way to the Banchory

■ WHEN Moir Lockhead went to Aberdeen 10 years ago to become the new general manager of the city's publicly-owned bus group, Grampian Transport, he earned a modest salary and was happy enough to live in a council house if his new firm could provide a field for his horses.

Four years later, in 1989, as the government's enthusiasm for the privatisation of bus companies reached its peak, Grampian Transport was flogged off for a pitifully low price to its managers, led by Mr Lockhead. He bought some shares in the new company for £65,000. Last year GRT, which had snapped up other bus companies in Norwich, Northampton and Leicester, was floated on the stock exchange.

Mr Lockhead sold shares to the tune of £650,000, and the total value of his shareholding is now slightly more than £6.5 million. Now, he has a mansion in Banchory with plenty of fields for his horses.

Mr Lockhead does not seem to be a shy chap. There are two pictures of him in GRT's latest company report (and another in an insert). But he proved very shy when the *Eye* asked him: "What in your view is the justification for such an enormous increase in your own personal fortune"? Had the average number of miles per bus shot up, for instance? Were more or less people employed per bus than before the original 1989 takeover? And was it true that GRT had negotiated a "sweetheart deal" with the other big Scottish bus monopoly, Stagecoach, whereby Stagecoach kept out of Aberdeen city in exchange for being left alone to run buses in the surrounding areas?

BOOM AND BUS: MOIR LOCKHEAD

Two weeks after these questions were sent, the *Eye* tentatively asked whether we could expect an answer. No, we couldn't. Mr Lockhead's secretary explained that her boss "does not answer anonymous letters". It is true, as the *Eye* admitted, that some information had come to us anonymously. But the figures about the Lockhead fortune came from his own company's documents.

Mr Lockhead has other things on his mind. GRT is now merging with the second biggest private bus combine in the country, Badgerline. This is a further step in the onward march to create over the whole country a huge bus duopoly answerable to no one but its millionaire owners.

PLEASED TO METER

■ TWO very successful water companies, Severn Trent and Welsh Water, are boasting about the dramatic cuts in disconnections — down to only 13 in Wales during the last six months.

How do they do it? One clever way is to persuade people to instal water meters. The meters ensure water for a week (plus another week "emergency") — but if you don't renew your meter payment card you get cut off... and you don't appear in the disconnection figures.

A recent MORI survey in South Wales found that a third of the people with meters had not renewed their meter cards and had been cut off. This was probably due to a fantastic 74 per cent increase in water charges since privatisation. None of these disconnections appears in the official figures. The companies saved huge fees in not taking the defaulters to court. "They have made a choice to cut themselves off," a Severn-Trent spokesman explained to the *Eye*.

The National Campaign for Water Justice bitterly opposes the meters. "It's disconnection by the back door, which leaves hundreds of poor people without water — and none of the figures are published," says chairman Neil Fishpool. Ian Byatt, the boss of Ofwat, the government regulator supports the meters.

THE SULTAN

Guess who's coming to dinner

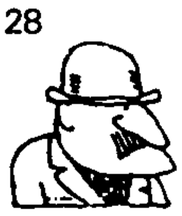
THE BARONET

■ The guest list for a very important dinner courtesy of the taxpayer has just been revealed to the Labour MP Jim Cousins. It was held in December 1993 at the Royal Hospital, Chelsea. The guest of honour was the Sultan of Brunei — the richest man in the world and one of its most generous arms buyers.

The full array of the British military establishment was wheeled out to grovel to the sultan: the chief of the general staff; his assistant; the hero of Sarajevo, General Sir Michael Rose; and at least five other generals, not to mention air chief marshal Sir Peter Harding, who had not yet been sacked for canoodling with Lady Buck.

There were even a few civilians present, like the editor of the *Daily Telegraph*, Max Hastings. Everyone had a position except one — perhaps the most important man there: Sir Denis Thatcher.

You can write to Paul Foot at 6 Carlisle Street, London W1V 5RG, or leave a message for him on 0171 287 3183



In the City

JUSTLY criticised for having finally given birth to the Barlow Clowes report after seven years and £6 million, the Department of Timidity & Inaction is still awaiting a report from an inquiry begun 12 years ago.

This is the investigation into the group of companies which helped sink the Savings & Investment Bank in 1982. Since 1983 DTI inspectors Elizabeth Appleby QC and accountant Peter Foss have been slaving night and day on their reports into Graylaw Holdings, British Anzani, Pennine Commercial Holdings and associated companies. One part of their life's work, Pennine Commercial, is still not complete!

Exactly when and if these tales of corporate pillaging will see the light of day remains unclear. The reason for the delay is said to have been the long delayed criminal cases and appeals related to Pennine, where SIB officials were convicted along with Pennine directors. It must also be suspected that the DTI and its inspectors do not want reports that second guess the criminal courts.

But it has to be seriously queried what is the useful purpose of incurring the huge cost of such exercises if the result is little more than very ancient history. Especially as some of those concerned have since died — Michael Morris of British Anzani — and Victor Gray of Graylaw was five years ago held to be too ill to stand trial.

It is bad enough that the taxpayer has had to wait three years after Peter Clowes was jailed for the 1,600-page confirmation of his guilt to appear. To take 12 years to tell the story of a series of relatively small time frauds is inexcusable. Especially when the supposed target for DTI inspectors to complete their report is two years or less.

What is bizarre about this affair is that two reports were indeed finished years ago. The Graylaw-British Anzani report was completed in November 1986 but not published. The report into Medway Secondary Metals, a British Anzani clone, was completed the next year. It was also unpublished. Even more ludicrous is that in 1992 the Manx authorities published an extensive report into the SIB crash which details the roles of Gray, Morris and the SIB officials charged in the Pennine case. By the time these reports emerge with another multi-million pound bill most of those who remember or care will be as dead as the fraudsmen.

And, lest we forget, also still to come is the final report on Guinness — from an investigation commissioned 18 months before Barlow Clowes in 1986. This too is still incomplete and has been endlessly delayed by legal appeals, first from Lord Spens, then the European court of human rights pantomime of Ernest "Alzheimer" Saunders, and finally the home office requested review of the Guinness Four's convictions.

With only four convictions, and even those possibly under threat, it would not be a surprise if the inspectors were somewhat toning down their interim criticisms of those already acquitted or perhaps soon to be so. After all, those found innocent by juries or judges can hardly be convicted by DTI inspectors. And those lesser figures — merchant bankers, brokers, lawyers — who were never even charged could hardly be so criticised as to be unable to work in the City if the main players escape.

The fiasco over the Graylaw-Pennine and Guinness reports raises serious questions as to whether there is any longer a need for such costly exercises in City history writing. The only point of such companies act investigations now is to tell a tale the courts did not hear. There is no longer any value to such probes where there is a parallel criminal prosecution. It is not surprising that since the Maxwell-Mirror Group Newspapers inquiry in 1991, such investigations have gone out of favour.

THE report from the Bank of England's in-house investigators, the board of banking supervision, into the Barings collapse will surprise no one. But then its only real purpose is to brand those responsible so they will never again sully the City's reputation by obtaining any senior banking post.

It finds Singapore trader Nick Leeson and his blinded by greed supposed supervisors guilty and acquits the Bank itself of any regulatory failure. Even those Barings executives in the line of no command above Leeson, such as chief executive Peter Norris and derivatives trading head Ron Baker, would seem to be acquitted of anything other than negligence and stupidity.

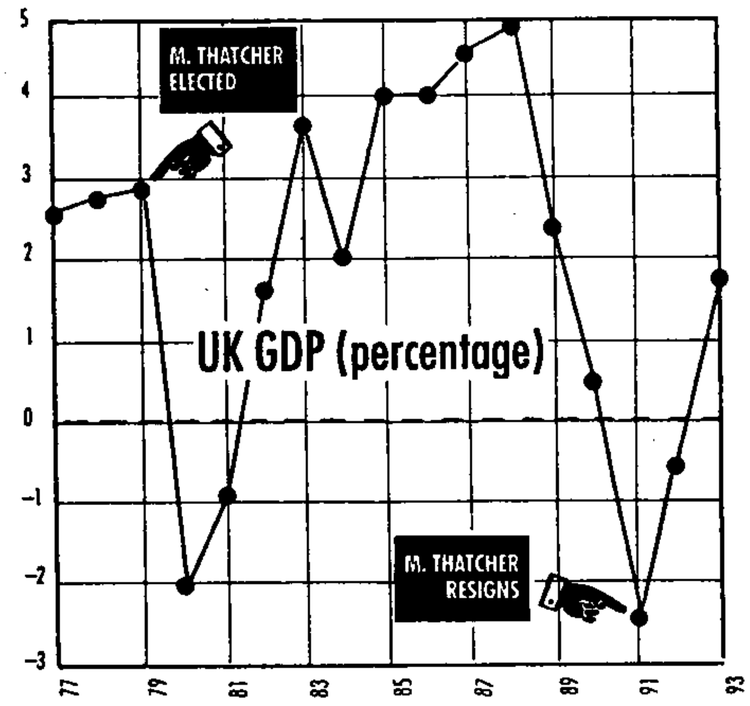
However this somewhat generous interpretation of their failure to act on the ever louder ticking from the £860 million Leeson timebomb of speculative dealings seems unlikely to be shared by the Singapore investigators. The Singapore take on what happened is much more realistic. It suggests that a cover-up was activated by Norris and others once it was realised just what Leeson had done by zigging when he should have zagged on the Japanese stock market.

The reason is not hard to find. All those above Leeson right the way to the Barings boardroom stood to benefit in their own bonuses from the profits made in Singapore. Having built the monster by hiding Leeson's previous financial problems, allowing him to be in charge of both dealing and settlement (a fatal blunder breaching the first rule of controlling bonus-driven traders who are prone to excess) and encouraging his supposedly highly profitable option gambles, Norris and Baker had to hope he would come right. This, and then the awful realisation that he could break the bank, explain the failure to act on the first wave of warning signals and then the frantic efforts to fill the ever growing black hole and to keep the existence of the crisis from the Bank of England and the Singapore authorities.

Needless to say this version of events is strongly denied by Norris, Baker and others who are to take the fall for Leeson. Sadly we will have to wait until he reaches a Singapore court room to hear what Leeson himself has to say about his crucial conversations with Norris, Baker, Barings treasurer Anthony Hawes and the Singapore bosses James Bax and Simon Jones in the months before the bomb went off. Leeson has refused to see either set of investigators, presumably very sensibly on grounds of self-incrimination.

A Leeson trial looks likely now in 1996. There is a good chance he will be spending Christmas in Singapore unless the German appeal process is greatly delayed. Any hope of a seasonal gift from the Serious Farce Office has receded even further. The number of SFO personnel involved in the Leeson case is understood to have been reduced to the minimum necessary for a watching brief should the German courts decline to ship Leeson to Singapore's inhospitable shores.

British Management Part 21.
MARGARET THATCHER, Prime Minister Great Britain plc ("Really just a big company" – 1978) May 1979 to November 1990.



UK gross domestic product (%)			
1977	+2.6%	1985	+4.0%
1978	+2.7%	1986	+4.0%
1979	+2.8%	1987	+4.6%
1980	–2.1%	1988	+4.9%
1981	–1.1%	1989	+2.3%
1982	+1.8%	1990	+0.6%
1983	+3.7%	1991	–2.3%
1984	+2.0%	1992	–0.5%
		1993	+1.9%

THE *Daily Mail* would seem to be making a half-hearted effort to mend deputy City editor Michael Walters' sharedealing ways following the revelation in *Eye* 874 of how Walters has dealt in small, speculative new issues which he has tipped in his *Mail* column. On 27 June Walters returned to the subject of Multisofft, makers in China of cotton toilet paper. This time — and for the first time — Walters remembered to declare an interest. "A wild gamble, I said, before buying a few in a 16p a share offer," Walters wrote. The "few" were 5,000 shares and 2,000 warrants: cost, £800. The tipster has lost half his money but did not declare that fact. And no similar declaration appeared three days later when the *Mail* reported how Multisofft shareholders had to attend an annual meeting despite not receiving the required annual report. No doubt shareholder Walters did not pen that item.

'Slicker'

THE DIRECTORS

DREDGE

GURGLE! GNMPH! SLURP!
SLURP! SLOBBER!
OH MY GAWD!
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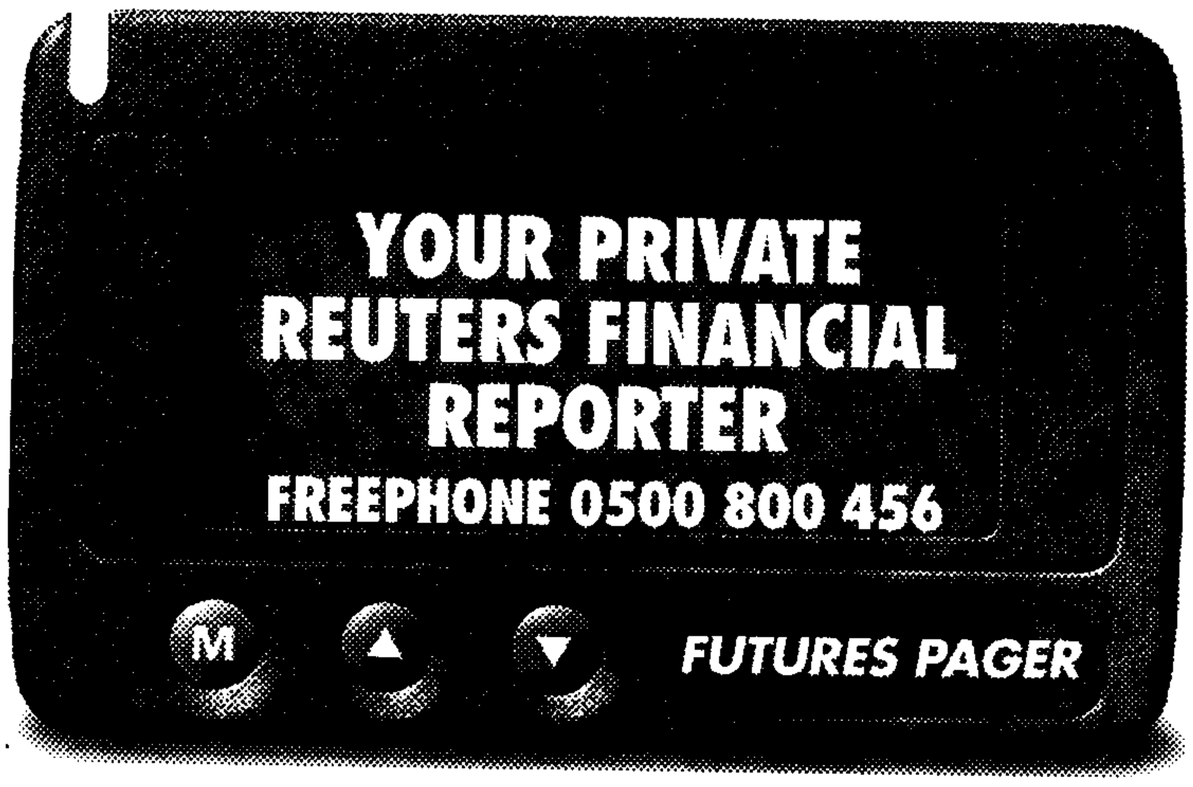
SLOSH! SLURP!



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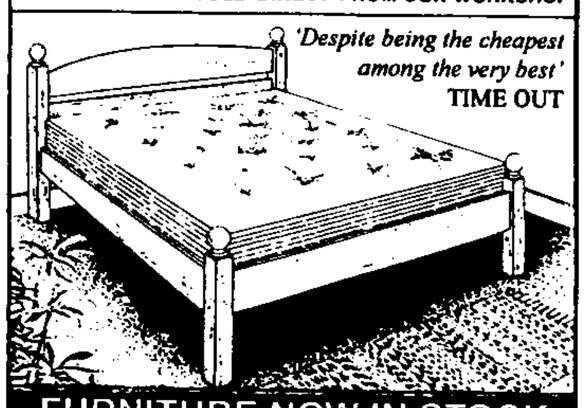

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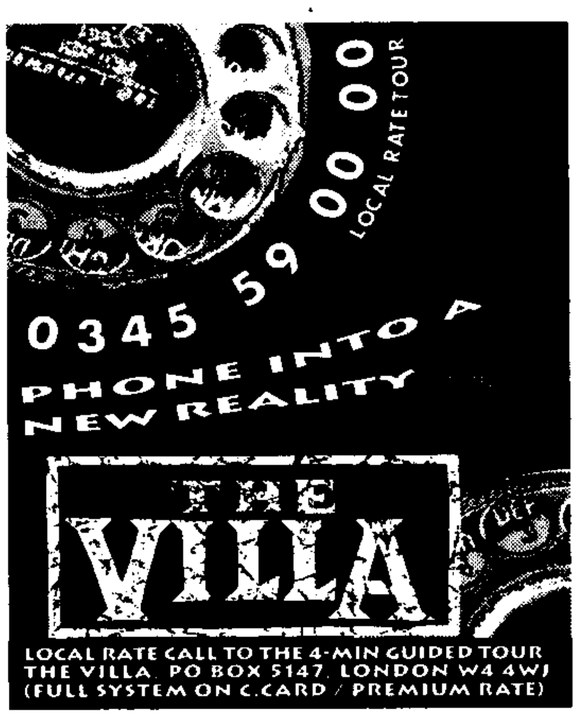
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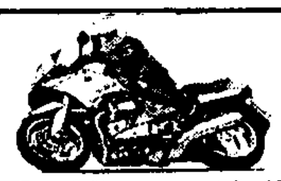

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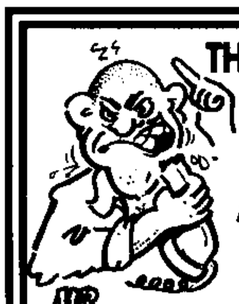

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SOLDIER NEEDED to rescue female (29) lost in Germany. Box 3375.

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APATHETIC EMACIATED knackered bored graduate seeks attractive woman for indecent proposition. North-West. Box 4375.

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SUCCESSFUL professional boy, 36, seeks stocking-wearing girl 25-45 for friendship, fun and frolics. Being brutally honest, I'm a bit short and a bit bald, but also intelligent, lively and with a great sense of humour. Interests are arty, foody and a bit sporty. London area. Box 4875.

TWO WICKED LADIES, late 30s, wishing to travel down the yellow brick road with two non-smoking professional tin men (not too rusty), lions or scarecrows. Good sense of humour a must, brave enough to tackle the tornado and kind enough to wake up these two Dorothys with a kiss. An ancient Toto is in tow. Box 2275.

DRY-WITTED attractive male graduate, 28, usual interests, seeks public school-educated female, 21+, South Coast area. Box 1076.

HANDSOME MALE 33, professional Asian, unhappily tied, seeks attractive female (20s-40s) for discreet caring relationship. London. Box 1176.

WELSH BORDERS. Overworked professional man, 40, WLTM woman who's tall, slim, spontaneous. Into travel, sun, walks, pubs, hugs, fun. Letter and photo please. No Tories need apply. Box 1276.

ACTIVE, RETIRED, sixtyish London man, seeks female friend of similar years and discretion. Existing ties no barrier. Photo appreciated and returned. Box 1376.

PETITE, INTERESTING, fit, young, 43 seeks funny, expressive man 40ish, Derbyshire. Box 1476.

GOOD-LOOKING SINGLE athletic male 37, fast lifestyle, needs stunning intelligent blonde career type, 25/35, into sport and like myself very choosy. Exchange photos, help end my lifelong search. Box 1576.

YOU TOO HAVE thought about it. You're curious and looking for a little extra. I'm male, 42, tall, professional, married, discreet, and in Herts. Talk to me. Box 1676.

MALE 30 seeks outgoing n/s female for laughs, romance. Photo appreciated. Devon. Box 1776.

DYNAMIC, DESIRABLE damsel, 34, seeks errant knight, photo appreciated. Box 1876.

ATTRACTIVE PROFESSIONAL male (mid-forties) seeks sensual attached/unattached female (40-55) for discreet adult relationship. Frank replies please. ALAWP. London/SE. Box 1976.

MATURE METROPOLITAN chap missing wife, seeks pretty polly with pedigree, 35-40, for passionate pursuits, possible permanency, photo please. Box 2076.

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LONDONER, 50, seeks affectionate ladyfriend for afternoons of conviviality and friendship. Box 2576.

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ATTACHED, KIND, humorous, generous chap, 44, very fit, seeks warm, earthy lady (not tall) 30/40 for intelligent physical funship. London/Oxford. Box 2776.

TWO BLADES, 30, seek two gorgeous adorable young things, 25-30 (not stone) for mutual, cerebral and sensual pleasure. London and country retreats. Box 2876.

GOOD LOOKING tall City broker, 38, adventurous, warm and fun seeks seriously sexy younger female with stunning personality and legs to match! Box 2976.

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SENSUAL MALE, 41, caring and honest, 5ft 8in tall, enjoys music, food and films, seeks a passionate woman, 30-45, to share life with. Ring 0660 206988

ATTRACTIVE, INDEPENDENT, Mediterranean brunette, early 30s, warm, sensuous, adventurous, n/s, Central London, seeks tall, handsome man, with gsoh looking to settle down and start family. Ring 0660 206762

EXCEPTIONALLY ATTRACTIVE MAN, highly successful in all departments, professional, cultivated, athletic, author etc, but also caring and spiritual, seeks equally exceptional woman. Ring 0660 206418

BORED, BRAINY AND BEGUILING, seeks light-hearted, lucid and luscious. independent, unpretentious female, 26, needs intelligent, amusing and spontaneous male, 25-35, to relieve social tedium. Ring 0660 206966

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THINKING MAN, LOVER, successful author, consultant, muscular. Excess in everything. That means everything. 45, divorced. Disturb, inspire and trouble me. Ring 0660 205965

COMPANY DIRECTOR, young, slim, 48, wants passionate ns slim lady under 40. Likes the arts, travel and red wine. Ring 0660 204453

STUNNING BLONDE, MID 30s, slim, romantic, caring with gsoh. Seeks professional businessman, 36-50, for friendship and sincere relationship. Ring 0660 206362

AFFECTIONATE, VERY HANDSOME professional white male, 38, tall, medium build, seeks very attractive slim female, 24-34 for a lifetime of love and romance. Any nationality. Ring 0660 206995

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CHAP, 29, PROFESSIONAL etc, no ties, some shirts, seeks similar/ different female. Yorkshire/ wherever. Ring 0660 205706

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SLIM, ATTRACTIVE MALE, 51, seeks attractive, athletic female for sporting activities and romance. Ring 0660 204102

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QUIET WHITE WOMAN, 37, University education, seeks romantic, sensitive, loyal male, of good character, and relevant education, for serious relationship. Ring 0660 206831

MALE, 26, ON OFFER: Tall, good shape, witty (except Tuesdays), good looks, romantic. Seeking girl, 21-30, who's attractive, caring, enjoys dining out, witty on Tuesdays. Ring 0660 206221

ATTRACTIVE, SLENDER, INDEPENDENT woman, 30, seeks uncomplicated, casual relationship with kind, decent, intelligent, genuinely solvent man. I am kind, intelligent, adventurous and poor! Ring 0660 206968

YOUNG 40 YRS, investor/businessman, Oxbridge colonial, too serious, good looking, new to London, seeks attractive, congenial lady to share this wonderful summer and ?? Ring 0660 206117

WILD WOMAN, CONSTRAINED by day job, 36, attractive, outrageous, seeks educated toyboy, with body and energy, whose brain is bigger than his ego. Ring 0660 206772

TEDDY BEAR, 32, seeks fun, attractive, positive female for hugs and romance. I look forward to your call. Ring 0660 206990

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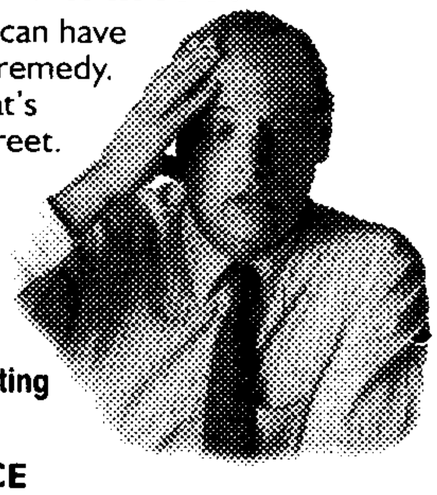

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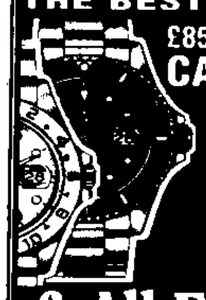

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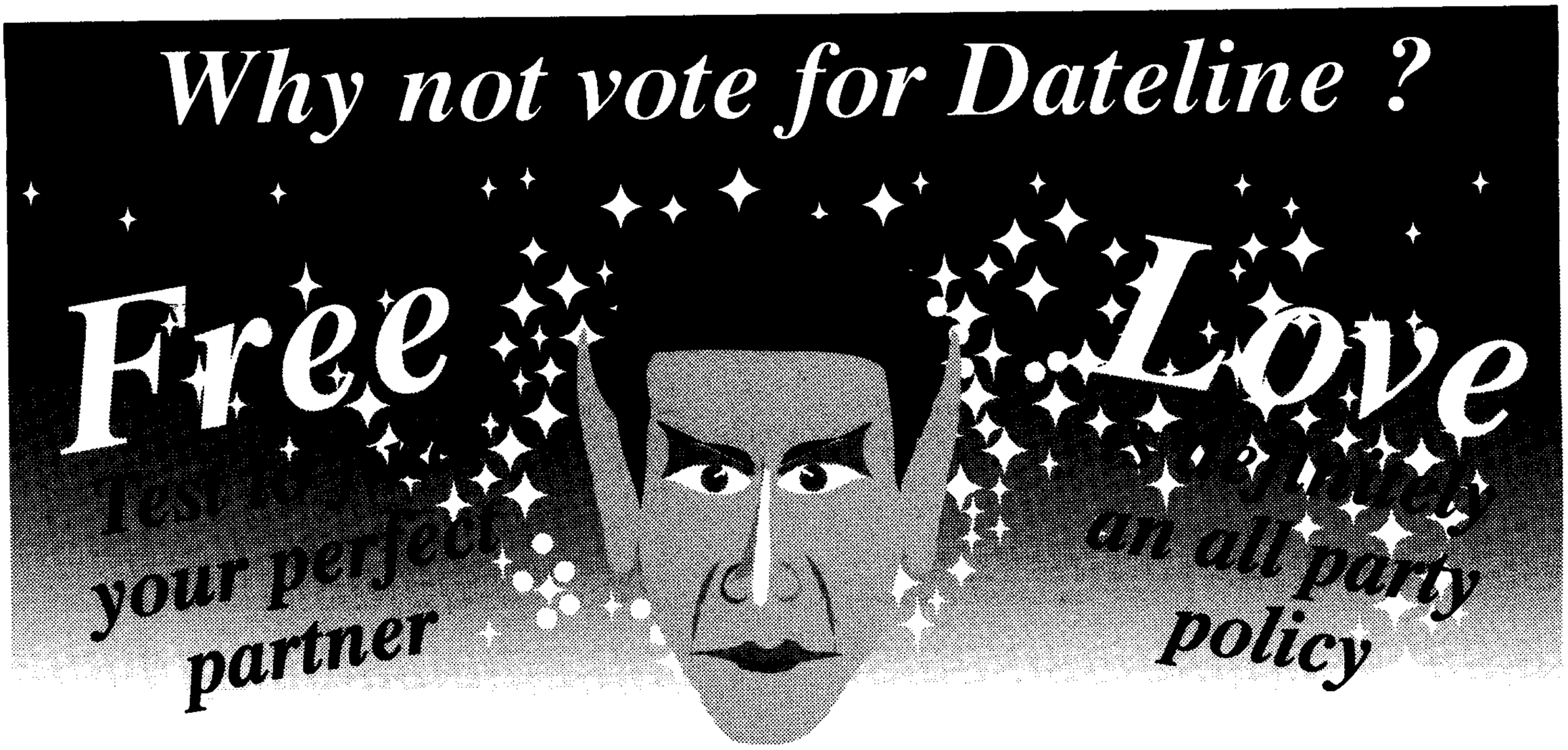

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Please complete in block capitals

1. Mr ❒ Mrs ❒ Ms ❒

Surname:_____

First Name:_____

Address:_____

_____

_____ Post Code:_____

Tel No._____

I am seriously interested in meeting someone through Dateline.

2. Personal Information

Marital Status: Single ❒ Divorced ❒

Widowed ❒ Separated ❒

Religion:_____

Age:_____

Place of Birth:_____

Do you have children of your own?

Yes ❒ No ❒

If yes, how many live with you?_____

3. Your personal details

Height:_____

Build: slight ❒ medium ❒ large ❒

Hair colour:_____

Dress/Looks: casual ❒ fashionable ❒

elegant ❒ sporty ❒

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4. Your work

Present job:_____

Self-employed ❒ employed ❒

civil servant ❒ manual worker ❒

part-time ❒ not working ❒

unemployed ❒ in-training ❒

Schooling

O levels / GCSE's ❒ A levels ❒

Further Education ❒ Polytechnic ❒

University ❒ Business School ❒

Other:_____

5. Your Personality

❒ Warmhearted	❒ Fashionable
❒ Serious	❒ Practical
❒ Considerate	❒ Conventional
❒ Shy	❒ Reliable
❒ Romantic	❒ Adventurous

Here's Your Chance!

Simply fill in this questionnaire and send it to us today! Or call us on:

01 869 324 100

6. How would people who know you best describe you?

❒ always ready for a joke
❒ somewhat dreamy
❒ never has problems
❒ takes life a bit too seriously
❒ not easily upset
❒ always active
❒ chatty

7. Your interests

❒ Wining/Dining	❒ Jazz/Folk music
❒ Pubs	❒ Classical music
❒ Sports/Keep fit	❒ Theatre/Arts
❒ Politics/History	❒ Watching TV
❒ Reading	❒ Smoking
❒ Travelling	❒ Drinking
❒ Science/Tech	❒ Children
❒ Cinema	❒ Homemaking
❒ Pets/Animals	❒ Gardening
❒ Pop music	❒ Countryside

8. Details of the partner you would like:

Minimum age:___ Maximum age:_____

Height: min._____max.____Don't mind ❒

Children?

Yes, at home ❒ Yes, living elsewhere ❒

None ❒

Marital status: Single ❒ Divorced ❒

Widowed ❒ Separated ❒

Don't mind ❒

Dept. PE 43

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